



Keeping children safe online during Christmas



As Christmas fast approaches, children are likely to use technology more or receive new technology as presents. Here is some advice to ensure their use of technology over the festive period is as safe as possible.

Technical approaches - device settings and parental controls

- Where possible, set up a device as a child's device, and link this to your account or your device.
- Apple's 'Family Sharing' and 'Screen Time' is great, allowing you to set parental controls, apply time limits on apps, notify you of purchasing requests and limit contacts (amongst other things). [Click here to see how to set it up.](#) Google's 'Family Link' app does similar for Android – [click here to find out more.](#)
- Internet Matters have created a really useful set of guides for other devices, including social media and games consoles – [click here to find out more.](#)
- Parental controls are important within online gaming platforms too – [click here](#) for Fortnite, [click here](#) for Roblox. If there are other platforms that your child uses, it is worth searching online to see how to set parental controls – there are lots of guides and useful YouTube videos too.



Remember, although age ratings for some games may mean they are suitable for your child, there are still sometimes risks, particularly in online games – these can include contact with others, inappropriate language, inappropriate content and in-app purchases. Also consider whether you are happy for your child to always use headphones – whilst practical, you will not hear what your child hears.

Support based approaches

- Celebrate positive use of technology – [The Digital 5 a Day](#) is a great way to encourage positive use.
- Be involved and stay up to date. Learn with your child - ask what platforms, games and apps they use, what they watch and who they connect with. [Net Aware](#) is really useful in detailing the latest apps and platforms.
- Have agreed rules and expectations. These could include:
 - Using technology where it can be seen and monitored
 - Having time limits and a balanced diet of activity
 - Not allowing technology upstairs, particularly not in bedrooms
 - Adults modelling appropriate use and sticking to the rules too
 - Agreeing to only use age-appropriate games and apps – many 13+ social media platforms and games contain inappropriate content and are not designed with the safety of younger children in mind
 - Formalising rules with a family charter – [Childnet](#) produce a really good template that you could use
- Have regular discussions and reinforce messages from school. [Click here](#) for some useful conversation starters.
- Understand that most online safety issues are not the fault of the child and that **any** child can experience issues online. Sadly, we cannot assume that "It won't happen to my child".
- Make sure that children know that there are reporting routes available and that there are people who can help. Children are sometimes worried about reporting harmful online experiences and often don't tell anyone. [Click here to see some reporting routes available](#) and sensible advice.

