

Managing Online Safety in the Home

These uncertain times have led to an understandable disruption to family life, with parents and children spending more time than usual at home, and online. Digital devices are providing many benefits, whether it's to help children to continue their education through distance learning, using social media to connect with their friends and relatives, or using technology for entertainment, such as streaming content from Netflix or YouTube.

While **all families have their own unique circumstances**, many parents have similar concerns when it comes to their child's use of technology

Here are a few simple steps to manage online safety in the home.

Have the Chat

One of the most effective ways to ensure that your child has a positive experience online is to have an open, and ongoing conversation with them. Talk to them about what they do online, and reassure them that if anything happens that they are uncomfortable with, they should not feel embarrassed or afraid to speak to you about it. If your child feels like they can talk to you about their online activities without judgement, or fear of the consequences, it will lead to more honesty, and they will be better equipped to deal with any negative experiences.

Set Up Parental Controls

Parental controls help to reduce the risk that your child will encounter inappropriate content online, and they can be set up on most internet enabled devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets and games consoles. They can also be set up through your internet service provider, and in online services such as YouTube.

Parental controls can be used in a number of ways, for example to only allow your child to access age-appropriate content, or to monitor and block their usage. We recommend that parents use, and regularly review and update, parental controls across all devices in the home. **Note: *For parents of young children it's important that there is very close supervision of their online activity, and that they are only online when you are with them.***

How to set up Parental Controls

OPTION 1: Parental Controls from your Internet Service Provider

Setting Parental Controls through your internet service provider can be the easiest way to manage what your children can access across all your devices and computers in your home. This can be done easily and normally for free by most internet service providers. We recommend contacting your provider or checking their website for more information.

OPTION 2: Parental Controls on your Computer Operating System

Most computer systems offer easy to follow steps on setting up parental controls which are free to use. Here are links to some of the main providers:

Windows

Windows Parental Controls allows users to set limits on the amount of time spent on computers, the games users play and the programs they can access. To set these up go to windows.microsoft.com/set-parental-control

Apple

Apple's Parental Controls filter can operate in 3 modes (unrestricted, automatic and whitelist). Ensure you choose the most appropriate filter for your child. For step by step info on how to set-up, see: <https://support.apple.com/en-ie/guide/mac-help/mtusr004/mac>

Chrome OS

For Chrome Book users, we recommend setting up **Supervised Users**. Supervised Users allows you to see what sites/pages the supervised user has viewed and also allows you to block sites you may not want Supervised Users to access. Find out how to set up Supervised Users here: google.ie/safetycenter/families/

OPTION 3: Parental Controls on Smartphones and Tablets

Whether your child has access to an Android/Apple smartphone or tablet, parental controls are available across all of these devices. You can turn off functions like in-app purchasing, social networks, app store access, camera access, Bluetooth and more.

Apple

You can use Restrictions to block or limit specific apps and features on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, including access to explicit content in the iTunes Store. For more information on setting up restrictions on Apple devices go to support.apple.com/

Android

This useful guide from PC Advisor gives step by step information on setting up parental controls on Android devices: pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/

Google Play Store

For Android Phones, we also recommend putting in place controls on the Google Play store. You can turn on these controls to restrict the content someone can download or purchase from Google Play on your device. Find out how to set up controls on Google Play here: support.google.com/googleplay/

OPTION 4: Parental Controls on your Internet Browser

Most internet browsers offer free restrictions to help manage what sites your child can access when online. Find out how to activate parental controls on the most popular internet browsers below.

Google Chrome: google.ie/safetycenter/families

Safari: support.apple.com/

Firefox: support.mozilla.org/parental-controls

Internet Explorer: windows.microsoft.com/using-content-advisor

SAFETY FOR VIDEO SITES:

YouTube Safety Mode: [Here](#)

YouTube have also recently introduced a free YouTube kids app which may also be worth considering for your child. Find out more about the new app here: webwise.ie/parents/youtube-kids/

Swipe TV

RTÉ have a dedicated channel app which is a great source of video content for children including videos, games, TV shows and more. The app is suitable for primary level children. rte.rte.ie/swipetv/

Time Online - Strike a Healthy Balance

Unfortunately, **there is no magic number for screen time**, and it is worth bearing in mind that children use their devices for lots of different reasons – to learn, create, play, and interact with

their friends. Under the current circumstances households are using technology for a variety of purposes, every family is different and may face different demands, however [setting clear boundaries and rules](#) can be an effective way of managing screen time, and also making sure that you **set a good example, and follow those rules too.**

Encourage Respectful Communication

Respectful Communication

Discuss the importance of being respectful to others online, and the impact that their behaviour may have on people. Encourage them to consider the other person's perspective, and how hurtful remarks or actions could make someone feel.

The internet is a great resource for children – join in with them and discover the online world together! Why not explore **HTML Heroes**, and help your child learn about online safety in fun and interactive way?



<https://www.webwise.ie/html-heroes/>

There will be websites, apps and links recommended for your child on their programme of school work each week. Please use these links in addition to the links below. Scoilnet- the official portal for Irish education and World Book Online-the recommended online encyclopaedia can be accessed via Scoilnet.

Scoilnet

Scoilnet is the Department of Education and Skills (DES) official portal for Irish education. Scoilnet.ie contains a database of over 20,000+ online resources including websites, quizzes, lesson plans, notes, video/audio, games and other multimedia.

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/>

World Book

World Book Online is a suite of online research tools that includes encyclopaedia articles, primary source collections, educator tools, student activities, educational games, pictures, audio, and video, complemented by current periodicals and related Web sites.

It can be accessed for free in the Republic of Ireland via the Scoilnet website.