

Online safety tips for children in primary school



What are children doing online?

Children in this age group spend most of their online time using video sharing platforms, watching TV or films and using messaging sites or apps with many also playing games and using social media.

Source: Ofcom Media Use and Attitudes 2022

Online safety issues that children can come across:



Cyberbullying: this is behaviour meant to hurt another person that happens more than once. Cyberbullying happens online, at school or at home.

Grooming: this is when an adult or usually older child builds trust with your child to trick them into doing something sexual, illegal or extreme.



Misinformation: when fake information is shared online, your child might not realise it isn't true. This could harm them, especially if it is a dangerous experiment they do at home.

Inappropriate content: videos, images and games that might be violent or have sexual content are not appropriate from primary school children.



Screen time: children sometimes spend too long on their devices without taking breaks. Or they might not know how to use their devices in healthy ways. This can lead to sleep, behaviour and other problems.



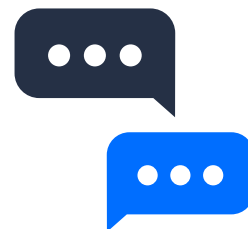
If your child has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), they may need extra support to stay safe online. These resources can help:

- Learn more about the harms they might face and how to support them at internetmatters.org/inclusive-digital-safety
- See how to help them face different online safety issues at internetmatters.org/connecting-safely-online

Stay safe checklist to support children:



Talk about their online lives: ask them what kinds of apps they use or games they play and what they like to do online. If your child knows you're interested in their online life, **they are more likely to come to you if something goes wrong.**



Set boundaries: together, **decide what your child can and can't do online.** Think about what times they can go online, how long they can spend online and what kinds of app/platforms/sites they can use to stay safe.



Set parental controls: parental controls help **manage who can talk to your child online, what content they can see or how much time they spend online.** Setting them can help keep them safe. Set parental controls on different devices, including broadband and mobile networks.



Explore features together: if your child wants to play a new game or use a new app, first use it together. See what they can do on the platform to check if it's **suitable for their age.** Check to **see if there are safety settings or parental controls you can set.** This will also show them you're interested in their online lives.



Show them safety features: to help them stay safe online, apps and platforms have different ways to stop online hate or inappropriate content. Get familiar with **report, block and other features** to help your child stay in control of their online safety.



Other helpful resources:

- Learn how to set parental controls at internetmatters.org/parental-controls
- Learn more about online safety issues at internetmatters.org/issues
- Find where you can get help or report online safety issues at internetmatters.org/report-issue
- See more advice for your child's age at internetmatters.org/apps
- Get advice sent to your email at internetmatters.org/digital-family-toolkit