

# Helping you help your child protect their online reputation

**BBC**

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In partnership with



**UK Safer  
Internet  
Centre**

[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

These days most of us regularly use computers, mobiles and the internet and know how quickly technology changes. As parents we're also aware our children can often keep up with these developments better than we can. Many of us will breathe a sigh of relief that there is someone in the family that knows how all this stuff works, but our children aren't as worldly wise as they are technically savvy and can be at risk of sharing too much information with their online networks.

For teens the internet is a fantastic, creative and fun resource, allowing them to keep in contact with their friends, develop their own identities, find out about their interests and connect with others who share those same interests. Most young people don't run into any trouble but how much do they think about their online behaviour? Do they consider how over-sharing online could affect themselves, their reputation, their friends and family away from the screen in the offline world? They need to know how over-sharing can lead to some unpleasant situations – even the breakdown of relationships with friends and family, bullying, expulsion from school, loss of employment and identity theft.

If your child uses popular sites and services such as Facebook, Blackberry Messenger and Twitter, they might be at risk of sharing too much personal information. These aren't the only places where care should be taken; also consider photos and videos, emails, instant messages, chatrooms, games, blogs, YouTube, and texts.

This short guide will help you to make sure your teen stays safe and happy online.

“our children aren't as worldly wise as they are technically savvy”

# Tips and advice for keeping your child safe

## **Talk to your teen**

Don't be afraid to ask your teen about what they do online. As a parent you help and support them to develop. Just as you know a great deal about their offline life, you also want to know where they're going and who they're meeting online. It's important to keep having these discussions as technology changes and your child grows up.

## **Choose what you share**

What personal information should you protect? A good way to think about this is what details would you be happy to reveal about yourself on a poster in your high street? How could a stranger use that information? Your teen needs to think carefully before they reveal their details online such as full name, address, passwords, email address, age/date of birth, photos, videos, school, phone numbers, bank details, future plans, location, membership details of clubs etc. It's surprising how much can be found out about an individual by gathering details from lots of different sites.

## **Stay private**

Social networking sites have privacy settings which allow the user to control who can see what's on their profile, so talk to your teen about how they use these. Check they've been honest about their age as some services have tighter privacy settings for under 18s. Get them to think about who they are sharing with. Chat to other parents about how they use privacy settings and parental controls.

## **Get smart about social media**

As a parent, if you aren't on any social networking sites it's a good idea to have a look and even set up your own profile. This will remove some of the mystery. Get your teen to help - perhaps asking them for tips on privacy settings as this could be a good way to initiate a discussion. If you already have an account you might want to befriend your teen – bear in mind they may want to maintain their independence and might reject or unfriend you!

## **Online forever**

As well as thinking about the type of information your child puts online, also encourage them to think about who has access to it and how long it will stay online. It's not unusual for teachers, employers or university and college admissions to search online for details about prospective candidates. It's worth remembering that information can be re-posted by others so even if your teen has deleted something they've uploaded, it's possible it may already have been re-posted somewhere that they have no control over.

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## **Respect others**

It isn't just about being careful with your information, it's also important to respect information about others too. Your child could affect their friends or family by something as simple as a careless comment, forwarding an email, or uploading or tagging photos and videos. It is good practice to ask permission of other people in any images that they post.

Remember that this works both ways - do you really need to post your teen's baby photos with the dodgy haircut and bad outfit? It's easy for these things to be found and forwarded – the whole school could see it in minutes.

## **Keep it under wraps**

Socialising, developing relationships and exploring sexual identity is a big part of being a teenager. Online technology has helped remove some of the awkwardness we may remember from teen relationships by allowing them to communicate easily, remotely and cheaply. Try not to forget in most cases this constant messaging is harmless fun. However, teenagers have been known to take, send and receive messages of a sexually explicit nature often containing images. This is known as sexting and is usually done via mobile phones. It is important to be aware that it is illegal to take, possess or share indecent images of under 18s.

It may be an uncomfortable conversation, but highlight the risks of sexting (or sharing any 'risky' images) to your teen. Encourage them to think before they send as they lose control of an image or any content the second they press send.

## **Know who knows where they are**

Some sites and services allow users to update their location showing where they are at any time of the day. Ask them who can view this information and find out how many of their online friends they don't know in real life. Discuss with them how easy it is for someone with this information to piece together their routines, for example from home to school, to clubs, on specific nights. It's also worth pointing out that these services have been used by burglars as they can show when there's no-one at home.

## **Know where to go for help**

If things do go wrong there are places you can go to report or seek help. For example in cases of bullying the school or college; the provider of the service if the law or rules of the service have been broken; or the police in serious cases. Ask your teen to show you where you can report something to the service provider. Also remember that asking the person who posted the offending content to take it down can be an option.

“Ask who can view their information... find out how many of their online friends they don't know in real life.”

# Organisations and Links

There are lots of organisations that provide information and advice. Take a look at the following sites.

## FOR PARENTS

• **BBC Share Take Care** [VISIT](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sharetakecare) [bbc.co.uk/sharetakecare](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sharetakecare)  
Helping you help your child protect their online reputation

• **Childnet** [VISIT](https://www.childnet.com) [childnet.com](https://www.childnet.com)  
A non-profit organisation working to help make the internet a great and safe place for children. Major partner in the UK Safer Internet Centre, organising Safer Internet Day. Also produced a range of factsheets and resources for parents offering safety advice.

Childnet also has sites aimed at specific subjects:

• **Know IT All for Parents** [VISIT](https://www.childnet.com/kia) [childnet.com/kia](https://www.childnet.com/kia)  
An interactive, internet safety resource that contains helpful videos and activities.

• **Social Networking** [VISIT](https://www.childnet.com/blogsafety) [childnet.com/blogsafety](https://www.childnet.com/blogsafety)  
Information and advice for parents around their children's use of social networking.

• **UK Safer Internet Centre** [VISIT](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk) [saferinternet.org.uk](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk)  
The UKSIC is a hub of information, research, and advice for children, parents, and schools on internet safety issues.

• **Think you know** [VISIT](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents) [thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)  
Offers a range of engaging materials to raise awareness of the risks to children in the online world. Lots of help and advice is available in a dedicated area for parents, brought to you by CEOP, the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre.

• **CHIS** [VISIT](https://www.chis.org.uk) [chis.org.uk](https://www.chis.org.uk)  
Promotes safe and equal access to the internet and associated digital technologies for all children and young people.

• **Parentport** [VISIT](https://www.parentport.org.uk) [parentport.org.uk](https://www.parentport.org.uk)  
Seen or heard something unsuitable for children? At ParentPort you can find out about the standards you can expect from the media and find out how to address concerns.

## FOR TEENS

• **Digizen** [VISIT](https://www.digizen.org) [digizen.org](https://www.digizen.org)  
Provides information and advice about being a responsible digital citizen.

• **Chatdanger** [VISIT](https://www.chatdanger.com) [chatdanger.com](https://www.chatdanger.com)  
A site highlighting the potential risks using interactive services like chat, IM, online games, email and mobiles.

## BULLYING

• **BBC Radio 1** [VISIT](https://www.bbc.co.uk/radiol1) [bbc.co.uk/radiol1](https://www.bbc.co.uk/radiol1)  
The Surgery's help and advice pages have a section on bullying.

• **Beatbullying** [VISIT](https://www.beatbullying.org) [beatbullying.org](https://www.beatbullying.org)  
Aiming to create a world where bullying, violence and harassment are unacceptable, the website has sections offering help and advice to parents and teens.

• **Bullying** [VISIT](https://www.bullying.co.uk) [bullying.co.uk](https://www.bullying.co.uk)  
A site offering lots of helpful advice about bullying, also runs a support service.

## COMPUTER PROTECTION, SECURITY AND FILTERING

Check your internet service provider's website. Most of them offer advice about internet security and filtering. The sites listed below may also help you to choose the best settings for you and your family.

• **BBC WebWise** [VISIT](https://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise) [bbc.co.uk/webwise](https://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise)  
This BBC site has a useful section covering privacy, security and child safety.

• **Get Net Wise** [VISIT](https://www.getnetwise.org) [getnetwise.org](https://www.getnetwise.org)  
A website reviewing filtering tools.

• **Get Safe Online** [VISIT](https://www.getsafeonline.org) [getsafeonline.org](https://www.getsafeonline.org)  
Government website focusing on internet security and protection

## REPORTING

Start by contacting the person or content provider responsible or your service provider may help.

You can go to the police to report something that may be illegal or the following organisations can help with specific issues.

• **Childline** [VISIT](https://www.childline.org.uk) [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)  
Counselling service for children and young people also has a section offering advice on online safety.

• **CEOP** [VISIT](https://www.ceop.police.uk) [ceop.police.uk](https://www.ceop.police.uk)  
If your child has experienced sexual or offensive chat while online which has made them feel uncomfortable, or someone is trying to meet up with them, you can report this directly to the CEOP Centre by using the ClickCEOP button which can be found on CEOP's main website.

• **Internet Watch Foundation** [VISIT](https://www.iwf.org.uk) [iwf.org.uk](https://www.iwf.org.uk)  
The UK's hotline for reporting illegal content found on the internet. It deals specifically with child abuse and criminally obscene images.