

INTERNET SAFETY

Most children in Scotland access the internet on a regular basis. Internet access has lots of benefits for children but we need to keep them safe while they are online. Keeping children safe is not simply about restricting the images they can see on your computer. It is now possible to access the internet from mobile phones, the TV, games players, and portable devices like iPads.

Keeping children safe

Parents and carers can help keep their children safe by:

- talking to children about what they do on the internet – showing an interest and explaining that if they see anything upsetting they can talk about it.
- making sure children know not to give out any personal information.
- explaining how search engines work, to minimise the chance they will stumble across something unsuitable.
- setting parental controls.
- looking for local computer or internet classes so they know how to use the sites children are using.

Privacy settings

Most social networking sites, like Facebook, now give children a lot of control over what they share and who they share it with.

Though a site's 'privacy settings' it is possible to control:

- who can search for you – this means that when people search your name on a site, your profile does not come up.
- who sees what – this means that you can control the information you share, like your photos or 'wall' posts. You can usually restrict this to friends only, friends of friends, certain groups of friends, or everyone. We would recommend that for young people it is restricted to friends only.
- who can post information about you – some sites enable others to 'tag' photos of you or share other information about you, like your location. Many sites enable you to restrict people's ability to do this.

How to set parental controls

Internet Service Providers (like Virgin media, Sky, BT) will all set parental controls if you ask them to. These can apply controls across all of the devices that access the internet through your home connection – such as laptops or games consoles. This will help to protect children when they are at home but not when they are elsewhere accessing the internet.

- filtering – restricting access to particular sites, such as pornographic websites.
- time limits – restricting the amount of time children can be online, or setting periods of time where children can access certain sites.
- monitoring – informing parents or carers of the sites their children are attempting to gain access to.
- reporting – telling parents or carers what sites their children have used.

Parental controls

It is important to minimise the chances of a child stumbling across things that might upset or disturb them online. Setting parental controls can help prevent this by:

