

1. Start the Conversation Early and Keep it Simple



It's never too early to talk about online safety!

- **Be Curious Together:** Ask your child about the games they play or videos they watch. Show genuine interest. "What's your favorite part about this game?" or "Who is that character?"
- **Simple Rules:** Establish a few clear, easy-to-understand rules from the start. For example:
 - "We only use devices in family spaces, like the living room."
 - "If something makes you feel yucky or worried, tell Mum / Dad / Trusted Adult straight away."
 - "Always ask permission before playing a new game or watching a new video."

The "Tell an Adult" Rule:

Reinforce that if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable, sad, or scared, they must tell a grown-up they trust (you, a grandparent, a teacher). Emphasise that you will help them, not get angry.

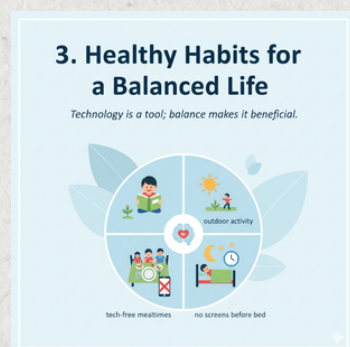
2. Setting Up a Safe Digital Environment



As parents of primary children, you are the gatekeepers to their online world.

- **Use Parental Controls:** Most devices, apps, and home internet routers offer parental control settings. Use these to:
 - Filter inappropriate content.
 - Set time limits for device use.
 - Manage app downloads and in-app purchases.
 - Ensure safe search settings are enabled on browsers (e.g., Google SafeSearch).
- **Check Age Ratings:** Always look at the age ratings (e.g., PEGI, ESRB) for games, apps, and movies. These ratings are there for a reason and indicate content suitability.
- **Co-Viewing and Co-Playing:** Whenever possible, sit with your child when they are online. Play games together, watch videos together. This allows you to see what they are doing and discuss it in the moment.
- **Understand Privacy:** Explain in simple terms that some information is private (like our home, our names, our pictures) and we don't share it with people we don't know online.

3. Healthy Habits for a Balanced Life



Technology is a tool, and like all tools, it's best used in moderation.

- **Screen Time Limits:** Establish clear, consistent limits for screen time. Balance online activities with outdoor play, reading, creative arts, and family time.
- **Designated "Tech-Free" Times:** Implement device-free zones or times, such as during meals, an hour before bedtime, and in bedrooms overnight. This helps with sleep and family connection.
- **Model Good Behavior:** Children learn by watching us. Be mindful of your own screen time and how you use devices in front of your children.

Sproatley's Spotlight

on Online Safety

Online Safety at Sproatley

January 2026

In today's digital world, our children have access to incredible learning, entertainment, and connection opportunities.

However, with these opportunities come real responsibilities and potential risks. As a school, we prioritise online safety education for our students, but the most effective approach is a strong partnership between home and school.

Staying safe online in today's digital age requires a proactive and informed approach, particularly when it comes to our children.

Beyond setting up technical safeguards like parental controls and privacy settings, the most crucial element is fostering an open dialogue with young people about their online experiences. Regularly discussing what they see, who they interact with, and how to respond to uncomfortable situations empowers them to navigate the internet wisely.

It's about teaching them to **"think before they click,"** recognise potential risks, and understand that adults are always there to help without judgment, ensuring their digital journey remains positive and secure. These are themes that are looked at through ongoing PSHE lessons with all children in an age appropriate way.



Online Safety for Our Learners: A Guide for Primary Families

1. Start the Conversation Early and Keep it Simple

It's never too early to talk about online safety!



2. Setting Up a Safe Digital Environment

Your guidance creates a secure online world.



3. Healthy Habits for a Balanced Life

Technology is a tool; balance makes it beneficial.

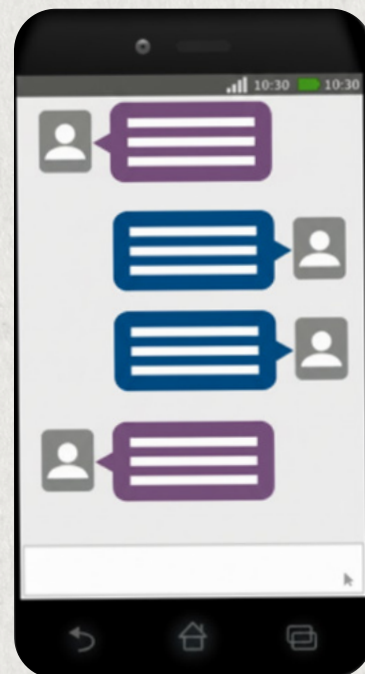


Mobile phones: do you know the risks?

Mobile phones have become an indispensable part of modern life, offering incredible convenience, connection, and access to information. For our children, they can be tools for learning, creativity, and socialising. However, with these benefits come significant risks that every parent should be aware of and actively manage.

Understanding the Key Risks

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the pace of technological change, but understanding the core risks is the first step to mitigating them.



Cyberbullying and Social Pressures:

- Mobile phones provide constant access to social media and messaging apps, which can be fertile ground for **cyberbullying**. This can include hurtful messages, exclusion, rumor-spreading, or sharing embarrassing content.
- The pressure to conform, maintain a "perfect" online image, or be constantly available can also lead to anxiety and low self-esteem.

Access to Inappropriate Content:

- Without proper controls, children can easily stumble upon **age-inappropriate content**, including violent, explicit, or hateful material, through web browsers, social media feeds, or viral videos.

Online Predators and Grooming:

- This is one of the most serious risks. Predators use social media, gaming platforms, and messaging apps to connect with children, build trust (grooming), and eventually exploit them. They often hide their true identities and intentions.

Addiction and Mental Health Impact:

- Excessive mobile phone use can lead to **addiction**, characterised by constant checking, sleep disruption, and neglecting real-world activities.
- Studies suggest a correlation between high screen time and increased rates of **anxiety, depression, and poor sleep** in young people. The "fear of missing out" (FOMO) is a real psychological stressor.

Physical Health Issues:

- Beyond mental health, prolonged use can contribute to **poor posture, eye strain, and reduced physical activity**.

Privacy Concerns and Data Sharing:

- Children may unknowingly share **personal information** (photos, location, school name) with a wide audience or with apps that then share this data with third parties. Once information is online, it's very difficult to retract.

Remember mobile phones and smart watches are not allowed in school. If a phone is brought into school it must be switched off on site and handed in straight away.

Your Child Doesn't Need a Smartphone to Be 'Safe'





Staying safe online

Further Resources for Families



We encourage you to explore these trusted organisations for more in-depth information, guides, and tools to help keep your children safe online:

Thinkuknow

- Educational program from the National Crime Agency's (NCA) CEOP command. Provides age-specific advice, videos, and games (for children aged 5-17) and clear guidance for families.

- <http://thinkuknow.co.uk>

NSPCC

- Offers straightforward, practical advice on talking to children about online risks (like grooming and cyberbullying), understanding apps, and setting parental controls. Includes the Net Aware resource

- nspcc.org.uk/keepin-g-children-safe/online-safety/

Internet Matters

- A non-profit organisation providing expert support and practical tips, often broken down by age, issue, or specific device/platform. Excellent for step-by-step parental control guides

- <http://internetmatters.org>

UK Safer Internet Centre

- The official UK hub for Safer Internet Day. Provides educational resources and a link to report harmful or illegal content.

- <http://saferinternet.org.uk>

Childnet International

- Provides a range of resources, including videos and hot topics, to help keep children safe online. They focus on empowering children to use the internet positively

- <http://childnet.com>

CEOP Safety Centre

- The Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (part of the NCA). This is the official place to report concerns about online sexual abuse or inappropriate contact with a child

- <http://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Report Harmful Content

- Helps people report illegal content online, including bullying, threats, hate speech, and harassment, to the correct platform or authority.

- <http://reportharmfulcontent.com>

Parent Safe

- The ParentSafe website, is provided by LGfL — the National Grid for Learning. The site provides guidance and tools to help adults navigate the digital world and protect children from potential online risks

- <https://parentsafe.lgfl.net/>

