

Online Safety

Online safety is everyone's responsibility.

Following on from the last article on Online Safety using phones, this week we will explore some frequently asked questions received by the [Safer Internet Centre](#).



What can a phone be used for?

Phones give young people a way to keep in touch with their friends and families, look up information and enjoy games and social media.

Phones can send and receive calls and messages, browse the internet and take photos and videos. There are also a huge number of apps that can be downloaded that allow the user to do many different things such as watch videos, connect with friends, make video calls, play games, get news updates, and much more.

How can I introduce a phone in a safe way?

Whether your child already has a phone or they are about to get their first one, explore the parental controls on offer and have a conversation with your child to set up some boundaries around their phone use, for example, who they can give their number to, or where they keep it overnight. Reassure them you want to help them to enjoy using it safely, and that they can talk to you if anything upsets or worries them while using it.

If your child is very young, spend time with them downloading some appropriate apps and games. If your child is older, have a conversation with them about what they like or want to use their phone for, and what apps or games they use. Give them a strategy to use if something goes wrong, for example, turning off the screen and coming to talk to you.

What about inheriting or buying a second-hand phone?

Restore any second-hand phone to its factory settings before your child uses it. This means deleting all data on the phone and returning to its basic settings, as if it was new. This will avoid you or your child potentially accessing someone else's personal information, private messages, photos, accounts, etc. It will also allow you to set up parental controls that are most suitable for your child.

For some tips on getting your child their first smartphone, see the [Internet Matters website](#).

What can I do to manage the risks?

Parental controls can help limit potential risks, such as installing passwords, blocking certain websites or apps, and setting time limits and spending limits. For further information on how to set up controls on a phone, visit [Internet Matters' Smartphone Guides](#).

Talk with your child about their understanding of the risks when using a phone. Ask them what they would do if something happened, for example, if they experienced cyberbullying. Decide together on what they should do if that happened, for example, take a screenshot and tell an adult. A [family agreement](#) can help you have these conversations. Explore safety tools such as blocking and privacy settings together and help your child set up these up where necessary.

Make sure your child knows to speak to a trusted adult immediately if anyone they only know online (a stranger) asks to meet up, for their personal information, or for photos or videos of them.

Find out more advice to managing specific risks [here](#).

What can I do if something goes wrong?

Reassure your child you are there to listen and help. Ask about the problem and try to find out how it happened. Try to remain calm and non-judgemental, to help your child feel comfortable in telling you how the issue happened.

Work with your child to report or block any unacceptable behaviour or other users. Contact your child's school for further support, particularly if it involves cyberbullying between classmates or inappropriate contact from an adult. If you suspect that your child is or has been the subject of inappropriate sexual contact by another person, report this to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.police.uk.

If your child has accessed inappropriate content, you can report this to the site or service it appeared on. Find out how to do this on the [Childnet web site](#).

Explore the settings to see if you can limit the risk of it happening again.

For help for on specific problems, see the following advice on [online bullying](#), [sexting](#), [pomography](#), [social media](#), [parental controls](#) and [online challenges](#).



Working together to keep our children safe and happy online.