

Growing Up Online

Top Tips

Be involved in your child's online life.

For many of today's young people there is no line between the online and offline worlds. Young people use the internet to socialise and grow and, just as you guide and support them offline, you should be there for them online too. Talk to them about what they're doing, if they know you understand they are more likely to approach you if they need support.

Watch Thinkuknow films to learn more.

The Thinkuknow programme has films and advice for children from five all the way to 16. Your child may have seen these at school, but they can also be a good tool for you to find out more about what young people do online and some of the potential risks.

Keep up-to-date with your child's development online.

Be inquisitive and interested in the new gadgets and sites that your child is using. It's important that as your child learns more, so do you.

Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world.

Think about what they might see, what they share, who they talk to and how long they spend online. It is important to continue to discuss boundaries so that they evolve as your child's use of technology does.

As your child grows and becomes more independent, it is only natural that they take this independence online. As we grow up we explore, try new things and sometimes push boundaries and take risks, this is an essential part of growing up.

With all of the potential that the online world and new technology offers, young people now have access to huge opportunities. They use technology to express themselves, explore, and be creative; it has changed the way they communicate.

The internet has changed all of our lives, and your child has grown up during this change. Many of the things that confuse, baffle or even scare us, are part of the everyday for them. For many of us, this can all be a bit too much.

Whether you're a technophobe or a technophile, it's still likely that you'll be playing catch up with the way your child is using the internet. You might wonder whether what they are doing is safe, and you might also be thinking *how can I be as good a parent online as I am offline?*



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Here are three good ways to help you keep up-to-date with your children and teach them the basics of staying safe:

Let them teach you

The people who know best about what your children are up to online, are your children! Get them to tell you about the sites they're using. Ask them questions such as:

- Why do they like the site?
- What can they do on it?
- What's so fun about it?
- Who uses it at school?
- Who you can talk to?
- Who are their friends on it?

This is a good way to develop a trusting relationship with your child about what they are up to online.

Reach an agreement

A good way to set boundaries with your child about what they can and can't do online is to create an agreement with them.

Here are some examples of the areas you might want to discuss:

- Limits on the amount of time your child spends online, or playing computer games.
- Having regular screen breaks – at least five minutes every 45-60 minutes.
- Not sharing any pictures they wouldn't be happy to share with you.
- Not giving out personal details, such as mobile phone number and address, to people they don't know and trust.
- Coming to you if they are concerned. Or, if not, knowing where they can go for independent help and support.

*You can introduce an agreement after watching one of the **Thinkuknow** films.*

Go to the movies

Your child may have watched one of our Thinkuknow films at school; they are a great way to start conversations with them about what can happen online and what they can do about it.

The films may also be a good way for you to learn about some of the pressures young people may face, what can go wrong and what you can do about it.

We would recommend that you watch the film on your own beforehand so that you're aware of the topics it covers.



Hamilton School
Hamilton Road
Handsworth
Birmingham
B21 8AH

Phone: 0121 464 1676

Email: enquiry@hamilton.bham.sch.uk