

Online safety tips for parents of 11-13 Year Olds

internet matters.org

More than half of young people have a social media account by the time they are 13 years old

*Source: Ofcom Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2019



Checklist:

Have a conversation

The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to **ask them to tell you about what they do and what sites they like to visit**. Discuss with them what they might come across. There are always stories in the press which will help to start a conversation. [See our conversation starter guide](#) for advice to help children open up about their digital lives.

Agree on boundaries

Have a [family agreement](#) about where and when they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. **It's a good idea to introduce tech-free meals times and encourage them to keep phones out of the bedroom at night** to help them build a healthy balance with screen time.

Put yourself in control:

Make use of parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices that your child uses. You can [visit our parental control how-to guides](#) to learn how to set these up or visit your broadband or mobile network's provider's website. You can also set up safe search in Google by going to the Google Safety Centre.



If you are giving a child their first device, you can set all this up together before they start using it so they can see how they'll be protected. It can also be an opportunity to have a conversation about online safety.

Remember, although these tools can create a safety net to protect children online, they are not 100% foolproof so **it's important to continue having regular conversations with children** about their online use to equip them with coping strategies to deal with online risks.

Check if it's suitable

The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks **are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child**. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. [Visit our guide to check the minimum age of popular apps.](#)

Get them clued up about social networking

Talk to children about the benefits and risks of social networking before they join any sites. Let them know that anything they upload, email, or message could stay around forever online. Help them to set their profile up so that they are in control of who can comment, message them etc. Get tips and insight from [our social media guide](#). If you have a child with SEND, [please visit our Connecting Safely Online hub for tailored advice](#).

Help them to be critical of things they see online and judge the quality and reliability of online sources.



Know this stuff matters, but don't know where to turn?

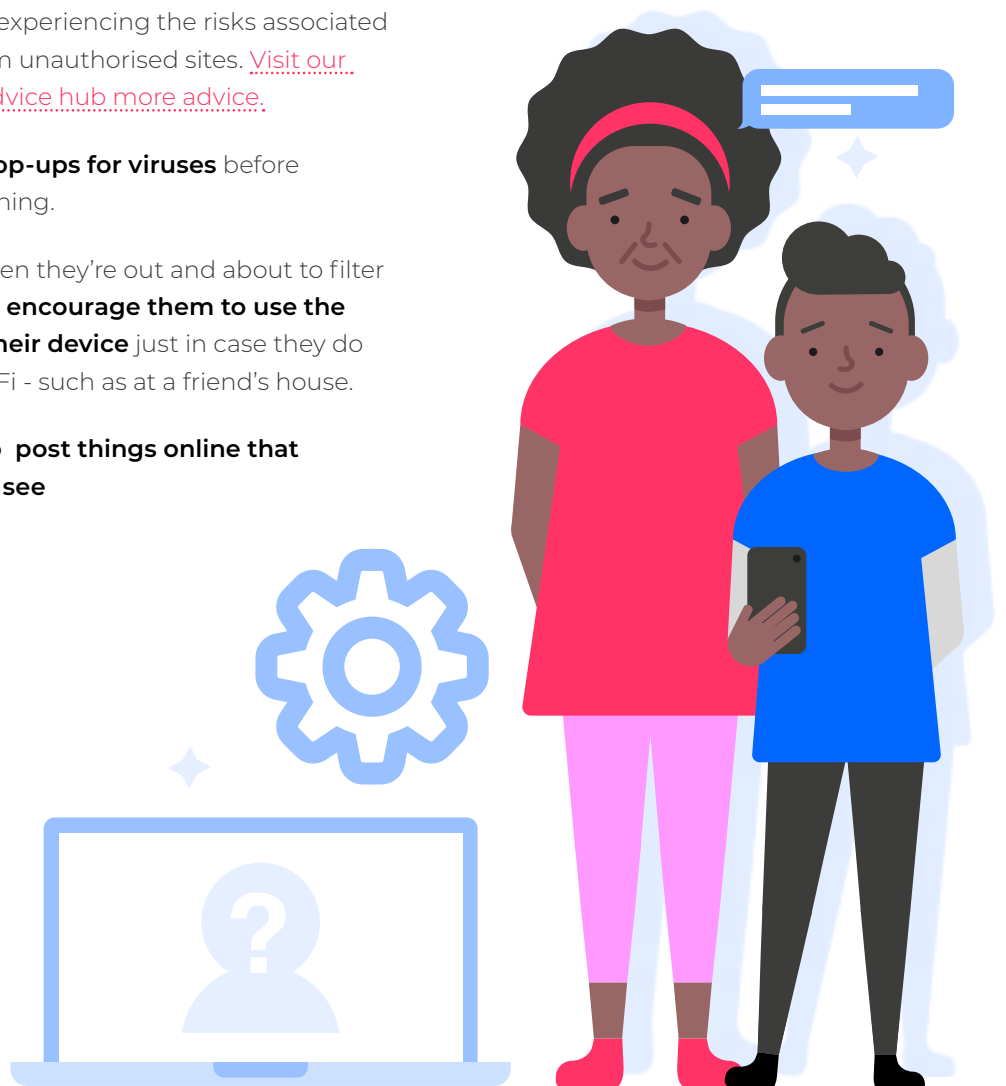
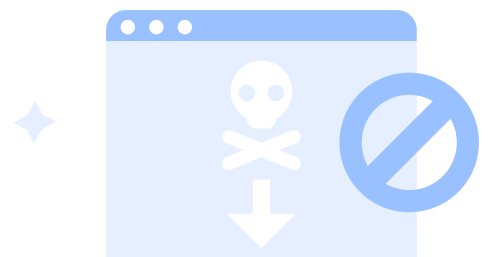
Internet Matters is a free online resource for every parent in the UK. We'll show you the best ways to protect your children online – with information, advice and support on all the big online safety issues.



Learn about it:

Teach your child some simple rules

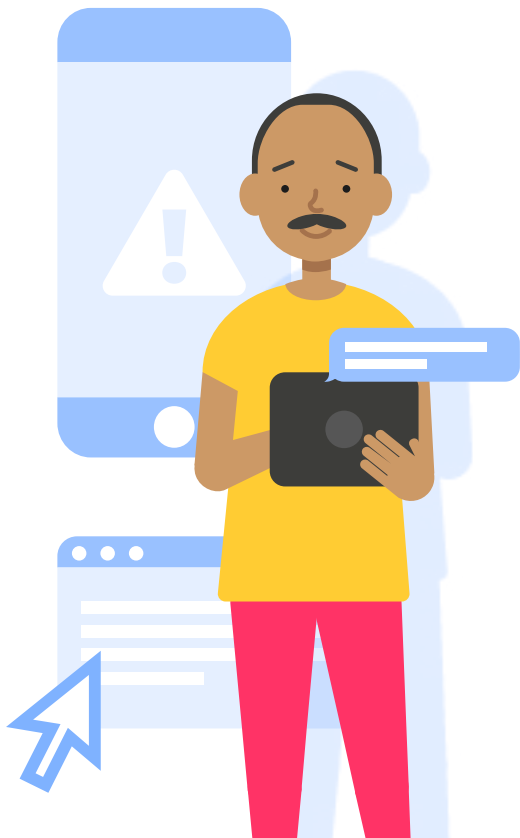
- Make sure your child knows **not to share personal information like their phone number or email address online** and if they need to provide this or similar information to sign up for a service tell them to check with you first.
- Encourage them to only talk to **real-life friends or family** on social media sites and in chatrooms.
- **Show them how to use privacy settings** wherever they exist to keep their information private - remember that the default on many sites is set to public. [Visit our social media privacy guides for support.](#)
- As children may go online to widen their group of friends, **set some boundaries when it comes to new friends online.**
- **Advise them not to arrange to meet with people in real life** that they've only talked with online without talking to you about it and getting your support.
- **Advise them to use secure and legal sites to download music and games** to avoid experiencing the risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites. [Visit our 'Dangers of digital piracy' advice hub more advice.](#)
- **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything.
- Use Public Friendly WiFi when they're out and about to filter inappropriate content. **Also, encourage them to use the parental control tools on their device** just in case they do connect to an unfiltered WiFi - such as at a friend's house.
- Make sure they know **not to post things online that they wouldn't want you to see**



Talk about it:

Tips for a meaningful conversation

- **Ask them for advice on how to do something online** and use this as a conversation starter.
- **Make sure they know they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online** and remember to listen and not overreact.
- **Be sensitive and praise them** when they share their online experiences with you
- Make sure they know **how to block abusive comments and report content** that worries them.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, **stay calm and listen without judging them**
- **Tackle peer pressure** by explaining that if they are talked into bullying someone online or sending inappropriate images it may get reported to their school or even the police. Read this guide – So you got naked online– aimed at kids to get insight on [how to deal with sexting incidence](#).
- Teach them to treat others as they'd like to be treated online and set a good example with your own internet use. [Use the Stop, Speak, Support code](#) to encourage them to call out cyberbullying when they see it.



Deal with it

You can find out where to get help and advice on the [Report issue page of internetmatters.org](#), where we include information on how to report problems - and which relevant organisations and agencies to turn to.

On this page, we also provide information on how to deal with any specific issues you may encounter with your child; such as [cyberbullying](#), finding [inappropriate content](#), your child's [online reputation](#), [online pornography](#) and [child grooming](#).

Learn more about apps

It can be difficult to stay on top of what apps your child is using and who they are talking to online – [find out more about the latest apps at internetmatters.org/apps](#).

Visit internetmatters.org for more advice

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