



E-safety Advice for York Steiner School Parents

Aims

York Steiner School aims to keep all children within its care safe. This extends to providing both parents and children with appropriate information on how to keep safe online.

Ideally children in the Early Years (0-7) should not be exposed to any screen entertainment at all with limited exposure from 12 yrs old. We recognise that this sets high and in some cases unrealistic expectations. However, as a lot of families at the school share this ideal, we strongly recommend that there should be no screen use on play dates.

If your child is going to be exposed to any online content on computers, laptops, phones, ipads etc. it is a parent's responsibility to keep them safe online.

Latest Ofcom research has shown that 81% of 5-15 year-olds have access to a tablet at home and almost 40% of 3-4 year-olds and two thirds of 5-7 year-olds go online. We know that children need support in these environments, to get the best out of using the internet, and there are real advantages in making sure that children are supported in their internet use right from the start.

We ask parents to consider the following to ensure all children's ongoing safety:

- Use free filtering technology/safe modes. Most online services these days come with privacy or safe modes built-in, it's important to switch them on for your child.
- Filtering technology can block harmful websites, age-restricted games, forums, chatrooms and anything else you choose. Some applications can do everything from creating weekly reports for you about browsing to logging the keystrokes on a device.
- Monitor your child's internet history for every device they use. Perhaps make a point of checking the internet search history at the end of the day to make sure everything viewed is satisfactory. This is easiest if you create for your child a dedicated account on a home computer or device. However, do be aware that is very likely that they will learn to delete their own records, so this is not always fool proof.

- As your child gets older less frequent checks are appropriate to instil a degree of trust. If children feel they are being constantly watched or spied on they will put more effort into covering their tracks.
- Placing your computer or laptop in a busy part of the house e.g. the living room or kitchen can be helpful. This can make it easier for you to be involved in their technology use. But remember, the internet can be accessed from a number of portable devices, for example smartphones, games consoles and tablets. Portable devices may allow you to ensure your children are using them where you can see them and your children can still be supervised. More information about the internet capabilities of smartphones, gaming consoles and other devices, can be found here: [Parent's Guide to Technology](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech) (www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech).
- Ensure that your child does not use social media page until they are of the recommended age by that social media provider.
- As a parent, if you have a social media page do consider what pictures you post of your children. If you have a picture of your child on your profile pictures, these can be easily downloaded by anyone. Never post pictures of other people's children unless you have their express permission.
- If your child does have social media, ensure that you can view their friends' list. Remember, like us, most schools and children's organisations etc. have a very strict social media policy for staff, so you should not see any staff on their friends' list. If you have concerns speak to the person responsible for safeguarding at that organisation.

The Internet is a useful informative and fun tool, but teach your children about the negative side:

- Talk about the internet and be open about what's out there. On the internet a 50-year-old person can pose as a 15-year-old, chatrooms can be used for grooming and personal information is given away at the click of a mouse. **(not suitable for children under 3)**
- People can easily access shared pictures and videos. Once you share an image on the internet, it is there forever and can become public property.
- Parents and children need to communicate and talk about what the internet is, what is isn't, and how to recognise the more lurid aspects of it. The NSPCC has information available at: [NSPCC online safety](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety)
- Know your child is probably smarter than you when it comes to the internet. They have grown up in a world of touchscreens and data plans, a world where content is free and personal information means little.

Ways in which you can help your children stay safe

- Explore sites and apps together and have open discussions
- Let your child show and lead. Get them to teach you, they will almost always know more than you so use the opportunity to normalise discussion around the internet, this will help should they ever get out of their depth or want to discuss any issues they might have.
- Make decisions based on what you think is OK for children of different ages.
- Education is the best tool that a child can have, so discuss with your child the importance of telling an adult immediately if someone or something upsets them online. Make sure that your children know that they can come and talk to you (without necessarily getting into trouble) if they see anything that worries them on the internet and encourage them to feel confident enough to do so. Other immediate strategies to deal with unwanted content or contact could include; switch the screen off, close the laptop, exit the website, or turn the iPad or phone over and put it down.
- Bookmarking sites or creating a 'favourites' list is a simple way to help your children find the content they want without having to search the internet for it.
- It is also important whilst beginning to explore the internet that your child realises that other internet users may not be who they say they are and that 'friends' made online are still strangers, so personal information should be kept safe, including their name, address, phone numbers and passwords etc.
- Encourage the use of screen names and nicknames where possible.
- Look at Net aware <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> this gives you a wealth of information on many online sites, allowing you to judge if it is a suitable site for your child to be on. It also keeps up to date with new privacies in games etc.
- If you are suspicious about the behaviour of others online, reports can be made to CEOP and inappropriate media content, online and offline, can be reported via Parentport. Criminal content online can also be reported to the IWF. For more information regarding reporting, visit our Need Help? section on the Childnet website.

Being Share Aware regarding pictures and videos

It's easy to send a photo or message but the sender has no control about how it's passed on.

When images are stored or shared online they become public. Some people may think that images and videos only last a few seconds on social media and then they're deleted, but they can still be saved or copied by others. This means that photos or videos which a person may have shared privately could still end up being shared between adults they don't know.

Every child is different, so your approach should be based on their character and your relationship with them. You could:

- Outline your expectations and explain the rules of having a mobile, tablet or smartphone. This might include time spent online, sites that can be visited, and behaviour expected; remember,
- what's right and wrong offline is also right and wrong online. It's a great idea to agree these rules from the outset, so that you and your children are aware of their boundaries.
- Explain what is acceptable to send to other people and what shouldn't be shared online.
- Make sure they're comfortable saying "no", that they know their body is private and being asked to share explicit images is inappropriate.

For further advice see [https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe sexting/)

Online games

There are many different online games and playing experiences currently available to children e.g. via computers, consoles, internet games and apps. Gaming may be the very first way that your child encounters life online.

Some games however are for adults or older audiences and contain images and language that are not suitable for children. Therefore it is important that the games your children play are the correct age rating.

Like film classifications, these ratings are determined by the game's content, and all video games sold in the UK are clearly marked with age ratings set by PEGI (Pan European Games Information). Google Play and Windows Store apps are also rated by PEGI.

Many games allow children to play with other internet users and may have chat features enabled. Some games provide a "safe chat mode" where simple predetermined phrases can be used. Playing these games yourself can be fun and will also enable you to identify the safety features provided, such as reporting to a moderator. Reading online reviews of games can be a really useful way to

hear other parents' experiences and feedback, and highlight potential safety issues like whether 'in-app' adverts are present, and whether the adverts displayed are suitable for the audience for which the app is intended.

There have been news stories of young children running up large bills by inadvertently making 'in-app' purchases whilst playing, so do look out for whether you can spend real money during the game; it should be in the app description in the app store. You can also disable 'in-app' purchasing on a number of devices within the settings.

Limiting time spent online

Children can be enthusiastic users of technology. The challenge can be to harness this enthusiasm and ensure a balance, so that the use of technology does not negatively impact on other important areas of young children's lives. There are some strategies that can be used to help manage the time online issue, such as agreeing time limits or using time limiting tools, designating weekly times to use the internet together, or removing portable devices from your child's bedroom at night to avoid tiredness.

Information and support

There is a wealth of information available to support keeping children safe online. The following is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.disrespectnobody.co.uk

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.internetmatters.org

www.childnet.com/cyberbullying-guidance

www.pshe-association.org.uk

www.pshe-association.org.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

<http://www.childnet.com> Online safety | NSPCC

Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Social Media and e-safety Policy
- Digital Image Policy