

Online Safety: Using Parental Controls

Below, we outline instructions for parental control settings on various common devices and provide a list of useful apps and software that can help to protect our children online. However, it's important to remember that we can't check everything that they look at and, if they have access to chat, messages or social media, we can't control the things that other people send them.

It's crucial to have open and frequent conversations with your child about digital hygiene, the things that they might encounter online, and staying safe. Agreeing on ground rules, promoting critical thinking, developing fact-checking skills, and discussing what to do if they do come across something that upsets or worries them, are just as important as parental controls.

The Tooled Up library is full of resources that will help you to initiate these important conversations, helping you to arm your child with the tools they need to navigate the digital world successfully. Remember that the internet is an amazing resource, which we want children to enjoy and benefit from.

The resources below can help to promote family conversations about digital literacy.

[Family Digital Values](#) – Discuss your digital values as a family, using this resource as a guide.

[Buying Your Child Their First Phone](#) – A handy guide of things to mull over before giving your child a phone.

[Parent-Child Phone Contract](#) – A set of rules for the whole family to agree on before children get their first phone.

[50 Things to Consider if Your Child Uses Social Media](#) – 50 things to prompt chats.

[50 Questions to Ask Your Teen about Their Digital Diet](#) – A list of questions to kickstart important conversations about digital life.

You might also want to listen to some relevant podcasts or read the accompanying notes.

[Dr Weston Talks with Dr Elena Martellozzo: Young People, Pornography and Online Safety](#)

[Dr Kathy Weston Talks with Professor Sonia Livingstone OBE: How Children and Young People Engage in the Digital World](#)

[Dr Weston Talks with Dr Jeffrey DeMarco: Parenting in the Digital Age, Radicalisation and Sexual Exploitation](#)

No matter how many precautions you take, there will be times where your child feels hurt, scared or confused by something they've seen or experienced online. If they come to you to talk about it, then congratulate yourself on doing a good job. Together, calmly work out what they could do to make things better.

We will keep the instructions on this page as up to date as possible, but sometimes providers will update their settings before we've had a chance to check. If you notice anything on this page that is out of date, please [get in touch](#) and let us know.

OPERATING SYSTEMS

iOS Parental Controls

The 'Content & Privacy Restrictions' settings found in 'Screen Time' on your device(s) allow you to block or limit specific apps and features. You can further restrict settings on your iPhone or iPad for explicit content, purchases and downloads, as well as privacy.

How to set 'Content & Privacy Restrictions' on your iOS device

Step 1 – Go to 'Settings' and tap 'Screen Time'.

Step 2 – Tap 'Continue', then choose 'This is My [device]' / 'This is My Child's [device]'.

If you want to prevent another family member from changing the settings on your own device, tap 'Use Screen Time Passcode' to create a passcode.

If you're setting up Screen Time on your child's device, follow the prompts until you are asked to enter a Parent Passcode. In iOS 13.4 and later, after you confirm your passcode, you'll be asked to enter your Apple ID and password. This can be used to reset your Screen Time passcode if you forget it.

Step 3 – Tap 'Content & Privacy Restrictions'. If asked, enter your passcode, then turn on Content & Privacy.

Preventing iTunes & App Store purchases

You can prevent your child from installing or deleting apps and making in-app purchases by following these steps:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap 'Screen Time'.

Step 2 – Tap 'Content & Privacy Restrictions'. If asked, enter your passcode.

Step 3 – Tap 'iTunes & App Store Purchases'.

Step 4 – Select any of the listed settings and ensure they are on 'Don't Allow'.

You can also change your password settings for additional purchases from the iTunes & App Store or Book Store. Follow steps 1–3, then choose 'Always Require' or 'Don't Require'.

Built-in apps and features

You can restrict the use of built-in apps or features by turning off an app or feature. This won't delete it, it's just

temporarily hidden from your home screen.

To change your allowed apps:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’.

Step 3 – Enter your Screen Time passcode.

Step 4 – Tap ‘Allowed Apps’ and select the apps you want to allow.

Preventing explicit content and content ratings

It is possible to restrict explicit content such as music, podcasts, videos, films, TV programmes, books or apps:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’, then select ‘Content Restrictions’.

Step 3 – Choose the settings you want for each feature or setting under ‘Allowed Store Content’.

Restricting web content

iOS and iPadOS can filter website content automatically to limit access to adult content in Safari and apps. You can also add specific websites to an approved or blocked list, or you can limit access to only approved websites. Follow these steps:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’ and enter your ‘Screen Time passcode’.

Step 3 – Tap ‘Content Restrictions’, then tap ‘Web Content’.

Step 4 – Choose ‘Unrestricted Access’, ‘Limit Adult Websites’ or ‘Allowed Websites Only’.

Depending on the access you allow, you may need to add information, such as the website that you want to restrict.

Limiting Siri features

To restrict Siri features, such as web search content or explicit language, follow these steps:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’, then tap ‘Content Restrictions’.

Step 3 – Scroll down to Siri, then choose your settings.

Game Center

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’, then tap ‘Content Restrictions’.

Step 3 – Scroll down to ‘Game Center’, then choose your settings.

Allow changes to privacy settings

The privacy settings on your device give you control over which apps have access to information stored on your device or the hardware features. For example, you can allow or restrict social networking apps from requesting access to the camera. To allow changes to privacy settings:

Step 1 – Go to Settings and tap ‘Screen Time’.

Step 2 – Tap ‘Content & Privacy Restrictions’. If asked, enter your passcode.

Step 3 – Tap ‘Privacy’, then choose the settings you want to restrict.

Google Parental Controls

With Google’s app [Family Link](#), you can view children’s activity, manage their apps, see teacher-recommended apps, track their location and set screentime limits. You can also lock their device remotely, and schedule when it should be locked and when it can be unlocked. You can use Family Link to create a Google Account for children under the age of 13 or add supervision to your child’s existing Google Account.

Note that Family Link does not work on iPhones, iPads or computers (other than Chromebooks).

To create an account for your child, install [Family Link](#). Follow the instructions on screen to create the account. You will see a confirmation on the screen when set up is complete.

- **On a new Android device**, follow the instructions on screen to set up the device.
 - When you’re asked to sign in with your Google Account, tap ‘Create New Account’. If you don’t see ‘Create New Account’, tap ‘More Options’.
 - Enter your child’s name, birthday, gender, email address and password.
 - Follow the instructions to sign in with your own Google Account, provide parental consent, and pick your child’s settings.
- **On an Android device that is already set up:**
 - Remove any existing accounts on the device.
 - Delete any apps, photos, or other data from the device you don’t want your child to have access to.
 - Follow the steps to add a new account to the device.
 - When you’re asked to sign in with your Google Account, tap ‘Create New Account’. If you don’t

see “Create new account,” tap More Options’ and follow the same instructions as above.

To find out more about managing your child’s Google Account, visit [Google’s support page for families](#).

Windows 10 Parental Controls

Step 1 – Log in to the administrator account, or any account with admin rights. Click on the Windows icon in the bottom left of the screen and then open the ‘Settings’ menu, by selecting the cog symbol.

Step 2 – Click on the ‘Accounts’ section.

Step 3 – Click on the ‘Family & other people’ tab and select “Add a family member’.

Step 4 – Click on ‘Add a child’ and enter your child’s Microsoft email address. Once this is done, click ‘Next’.

Step 5 – Enter your mobile phone number and click “Next”. Untick both boxes on the next screen and click ‘Next’.

Step 6 – Wait for a ‘Good to go!’ message to pop up and make a note of the account.microsoft.com/family web address which you will use to monitor and alter your child’s account. Then click ‘Close’.

Step 7 – You will now see the newly created Family account under ‘Your Family’. Everyone can log into their account on this computer. To ensure your child is protected, they must be logged into this account when using the computer. Click on the ‘Manage family settings online’ link here.

Step 8 – You will be redirected to the online platform where you will be able to manage the settings of your child’s account. Select the ‘Activity’ link. On this platform, you can set reports, see your child’s web searches, web browsing, apps, games, and overall screen time. You are able to set restrictions for each of these categories. Now click on the “Screen time” link.

Step 9 – Here you will see the screen time for each device your child uses with this account. You can set limits on the devices by activating the “Screen time limits” buttons. Next, click on “Content restrictions”. This allows you to set what your child will be able to purchase, add age limits for games and apps, block apps and websites, or set a list of specific websites.

Note that the web restrictions only work on Edge or Internet Explorer web browsers. Ensure that other browsers on your computer are blocked on this page.

Gaming Consoles

Nintendo Switch Parental Controls

Nintendo offers a [Nintendo Switch Parental Controls App](#) which allows you to link to your child’s Switch and easily monitor what and how they are playing.

You can also make changes in the Switch itself, by following these steps:

Step 1 – Go to ‘System Settings’ on the main screen, either in handheld or docked mode.

Step 2 – Scroll down the left-hand bar to the ‘Parental Controls’ option and click on the ‘Parental Control Settings’ (the highlighted box on the right-hand side of the screen).

Step 3 – A page will open that offers two options: you can either set simple parental controls by restricting the gameplay by age (so only games of a certain rating can be played) or you can set more complex parental controls through the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls App.

Step 4 – If you choose to restrict gameplay on the console, you can set the age limits of different features, such as the games and whether the user can post screenshots taken on the Switch on social networks or communicate with other players.

Step 5 – Restrict levels available to choose from are Teen, Child, Young Child or alternatively you can even customise the options yourself.

PlayStation 5 Parental Controls

Step 1 – You can set parental controls from a web browser or on your PlayStation console. Sign in to ‘Account Management’, then ‘Family Management’. Next, select the child account you want to set restrictions for and click on ‘Edit’ to adjust the feature.

Step 2 – Go to ‘Settings’, normally located in the top right-hand corner of the screen.

Step 3 – Select ‘Family and Parental Controls’, ‘Family Management’, then ‘Parental Controls’.

Step 4 – Choose one of the following restriction levels from the dropdown menu- ‘Late Teens or Older’, ‘Early Teens’, ‘Child’, ‘No Restrictions’ or ‘Customise’.

Step 5 – Within the Restriction Level, you can customise your child’s experience, including communication and user-generated content and the ability to chat or message other players. You can set a monthly spending limit (£0-unlimited), filtering for Online Content and you can restrict access to websites shared in messages and links to pages inside games. Select the appropriate level then press ‘Confirm’ to save.

Parental Controls for Xbox One X and Xbox One S

Step 1 – When on the Xbox one dashboard select ‘Settings’.

Step 2 – Select the ‘Privacy & Online Safety’ menu.

Step 3 – Select ‘Child Defaults’ to restrict all adult content from the user. Or select ‘Custom’ to customise the settings for your preference.

Step 4 – Next, Select ‘Use, but customise’.

Step 5 – There will be a number of default privacy settings you can choose from. Select one and either keep the default settings or customise them to suit your needs.

Step 6 – Next select ‘Content & Apps’ and choose the ‘Access to Content & Apps’ menu.

Step 7 – Choose what age group you want the restrictions to apply to.

Other online tools

Wifi Parental Control Settings

Parental control settings in your Wifi will differ depending on the provider. Usually, you can access the settings by logging into your online account and following the steps outlined there. Alternatively, contact your provider by phone, email or chat and ask them to do it for you or to help out with specific instructions.

Online Tools for Children’s Safety and Privacy

[Learn about Google Safety Tools for Families](#)

[Qustodio](#)

Locks and limits inappropriate content, games and apps, monitors social media, manages screen time and tracks location.

[Kaspersky](#)

Aside from enabling content restrictions, Kaspersky blocks harmful YouTube search requests and helps to manage screen time, games and inappropriate apps. It also reports Facebook activity and shares advice from child psychologists about online issues.

[Mobicip](#)

Enables users to monitor, control and lock all devices from one app. You can review a month’s worth of internet browsing, block websites by category and allow or block social media apps, games, video streaming apps and sites.

[OurPact](#)

Blocks or allows specific apps and schedules allowances on phone or tablet. This app features content monitoring, but not within social media. Geo-fencing is also available with this software and texting can be blocked or scheduled.

[WebSafety](#)

This software monitors web content, rather than blocking it. Parents receive real time alerts to their phone if inappropriate websites are visited, a new app is downloaded or if concerning topics/words appear in messages.

Parents are also alerted when photos are uploaded to social media and can view the post as well as comments. Location tracking, geo-fencing and screen time curfew are included as is the ability to immediately lock devices.

Child-friendly Search Engines

There are also plenty of child-friendly search engines that children can use to explore the web, such as [KidRex](#), [Swiggle](#), [Safe Search Kids](#) or [Fact Monster](#). You can also switch on Google SafeSearch and set YouTube safe mode to make sure they only see age-appropriate results.

If you need any further advice on how to set up parental controls or adjust privacy settings, you can always call the [NSPCC Safety Helpline](#) on 0808 800 5002.

