

Sexting safety advice

- Don't wait for an incident to happen to your child or your child's friend before you talk about the consequences of sexting. Talking about this can be uncomfortable, but it's better to have the talk before something happens.
- Remind your kids that once an image is sent, it can never be retrieved – and they will lose control of it. Ask them how they would feel if their teachers, parents, or the entire school saw the picture, because that is what might happen.
- Talk about pressures to send revealing photos. Let them know that you understand how they can be pushed or dared into sending something. Tell them that no matter how big the social pressure is, the potential social humiliation can be hundreds of times worse.
- Teach your children what to do. If someone sends them a photo, they should delete it immediately. It's better to be part of the solution than the problem.

A Parent's Guide to Dealing with Sexting can be found on:
www.saferinternet.org.uk

Find out about the new app Zipit, developed by ChildLine to help young people 'get flirty chat back on track'. It gives a selection of 'killer comebacks' to use if someone asks them to send explicit pictures.
www.childline.org.uk

Online gaming safety tips

- Be aware of the location of the games console; a family room is best for monitoring and supervision.
- Discuss the risks with your child and ensure they have privacy settings activated and know why.
- Gaming sites often have ways of reporting abusive chat. Ensure that your child knows how to do this, and that they should also report it to you.
- Play the games yourself to test for appropriateness.
- Ask your child what they are playing. Watch them playing and always keep lines of communication open.
- Games consoles often have parental controls – read the manual or contact the manufacturer to find out how to install these.

What can I do to keep my child safe?

- Ask about safety features before you buy mobile phones/computers/laptops/gaming devices

Understand the devices your child uses. 'Parents' Guide to Technology' on www.saferinternet.org.uk will answer some of your questions about what they are, how your child can stay safe using them, questions to ask in the shop when buying one, and more.

Similarly, Ofcom provide safety advice in relation to different devices:
<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk> – search for 'advice for parents'

- Install filtering and parental controls...but remember these are never 100% effective

- Visit www.saferinternet.org.uk for video guides from BT, Sky, TalkTalk and SkyMedia on installing parental controls
- Type into a search engine the name of the device and 'parental controls'
- When you buy your child a new device, read the manual for safety information

- Talk to your child and be involved in their online life. Conversation starters to help you broach the subject are available on ChildNet's website: www.childnet.com
- Look at the websites your child talks about, so you have an idea of what they involve
- Create a sentence together that your child can use if they want to exit an uncomfortable conversation online
- Agree clear rules with your child about:
 - o What personal information should not be disclosed (e.g. full name, email address, phone number, home address, school name, photos)
 - o Time spent online – when, how long...
 - o Contacting people online – distinguish between online and offline 'friends'
 - o Meeting online 'friends' offline

Ensure your child's privacy settings are set to private on the social networking sites they use and help them to understand why.

Advice can be accessed at:

www.facebook.com/help/privacy
www.saferinternet.org.uk

- Watch out for signs of excessive use of the Internet
- If necessary, monitor and log conversations your child is having online
- Use child friendly search engines to decrease the chances of your child being exposed to inappropriate content on the Internet (e.g. www.swiggle.org.uk or www.kids-search.com)
- Bookmark websites as 'favourites' to minimise use of search engines
- Use the browser history to keep an eye on what websites your child has been looking at
- Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if something online has worried or upset them

Call the Stop it Now! Helpline on 0808 1000 900... if you have concerns about online or offline sexual behaviour involving your child.