Young People ICT and e-safety

Advice for Parents and Carers

Young people have been born into the 'digital age'. They use computers, mobile phones, video games consoles etc., as part of their everyday lives. They often seem 'expert' compared to parents! But, young people do not have the 'life experience' of adults and need your support. You can provide this by talking to your child about what they are doing.

Benefits of using ICT at home

Many studies have found benefits of having access to a computer and/or the Internet at home. The benefits can include:

- improves students' achievement

- improves their ICT skills and makes learning more fun

- offers them choice in what they learn and how they learn it

- supports homework and revision

- provides a wider and more flexible range of learning materials

- improves the presentation of their work

- connects learning at school with learning at home.

Using ICT at home and at school develops skills for life.
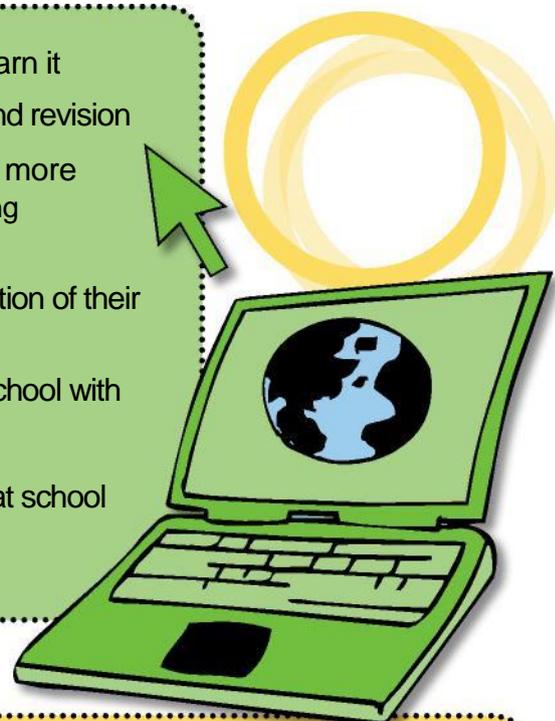
Using the Internet safely at home

Some useful 'rules' to keep young people safe:

- never tell anyone your password(s) - treat them like your toothbrush - don't share!

- never give out personal information about yourself, friends or family online that lets people locate them, such as home address, phone number, the school you go to, etc.;

- don't upload photographs of yourself in your school uniform or in inappropriate clothing (even to a friend);

- think before you 'post' or 'forward' anything;

- only use a webcam with people you really know 'off-line';

- never use a webcam to do something that exposes you to danger or embarrassment;

- avoid going to websites you could not tell your parents about;

- think about whether you really can trust each website you go to and if the information is genuine or biased;

- do use websites recommended by teachers (your school will have a safe online managed learning environment for school/homework);

- only email people you know or trust;

- be careful before opening an email attachment sent by someone you don't know – if in doubt do not open, and delete it;

- be careful about 'pop-ups' and adverts that say you have won something;

- don't use your real name when using games or websites on the Internet, (create a nickname);

- where you are old enough to use social networking sites (usually 13yrs+), know how to keep your profile and location private;

- use Internet chat rooms, online game-sharing spaces, instant messaging etc., with caution and know how to block and report unwanted users;

- be aware that comments you make on message walls, Blogs, Wikis etc., can be viewed by others;

- be polite and sensible online;

- never arrange to meet anyone alone and always discuss any possible meeting with an adult first;

- tell an adult you trust immediately if you encounter anything you are unhappy with;

- if serious, report concerns to CEOP.

CLICK CEOP
Internet Safety

Using these rules

Go through these useful rules with your child. Talk to them regularly about what they are doing so you build a relationship of trust.

Develop Internet 'skills'

Swimming pools can be dangerous places, so we teach children to swim. Crossing the road can be dangerous, so we teach children road safety skills. We do not stop young people from swimming or crossing roads! So too, we must teach them how to be safe online so they can have fun, enjoy creative aspects and benefit from the learning opportunities. We must however still be aware of danger signs so we can deal with them.
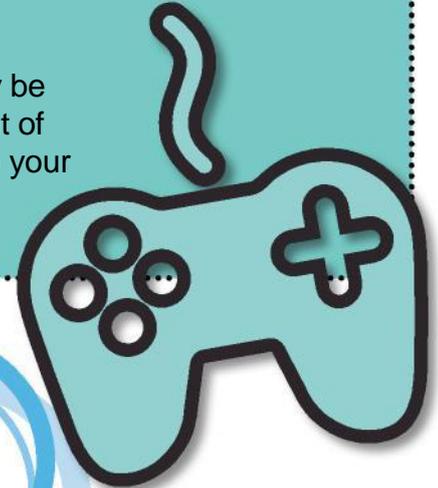
Danger signs you should look out for

If your child is:

- using the computer in an excessive way
- staying online through the night
- being secretive about what they are doing.

These signs may be perfectly innocent of course, so talk to your daughter or son.

Cyber-bullying

Unfortunately, sometimes children can be bullied by others online or by mobile phone. So, be aware of your child's mood changes. If your child is being bullied online, follow it up. Keep the evidence, contact your child's school for help, contact the website owner or phone company if necessary. Get advice from an organisation such as the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

Danger signs your child should know about.

Beware if someone ...

- tries various ways to get you to tell them your address or phone number
- wants to keep their chats with you secret
- shares information with you and tells you not to tell anyone else about it
- emails you pictures which make you feel uncomfortable and which you would not want to show to anyone else
- wants you to email them pictures of yourself or use a webcam in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable
- tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell an adult what has been going on.

Put in sensible 'technical' solutions

Most Internet Service Providers offer filtering systems and parental control tools to help you safeguard your child at home. Find out how these work.

Develop trust

However, it remains surprisingly easy for young people to access inappropriate material including unsuitable text, pictures and movies. So, develop trust. It is most important that your child feels able to tell you if they find something inappropriate or they get inappropriate attention from someone. If somthing happens, don't overreact. Children experiment and make mistakes. Stay calm and take advice.

Use the school online learning environment

Your school may have a Managed Learning Environment in-place (such as the London MLE) – which provides a 'safe' online learning space. Teachers create the materials, check the links and use recommended resources.

Put the computer in a family room

With younger children, it is a good idea to locate the computer in a family area, not a bedroom, so you can better supervise them. Agree and manage the time your child spends online and try to do some things with them.

Use age-appropriate 'tools'

Mobile phones, games consoles and other devices can often also access the Internet. So, consider this and check they use age-appropriate games. With younger children, to help them do other things online, 'bookmark' child friendly sites or search engines for them to use, such as:

Ask Jeeves: **www.askkids.com**
Yahoo! Kids: **www.kids.yahoo.com**
Google primary safe search:
http://primaryschoolict.com/

Some useful websites for parents

Child-net International: **www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents**

Think U Know: **www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents**

DirectGov: **www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Internetsafety/index.htm**

Anti-bullying Alliance: **www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/**

If you have concerns

- Talk to your child's school

- Report any serious abuse using the national 'CLICK CEOP' link.

CLICK CEOP Internet Safety

This takes you to a site managed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) **www.ceop.gov.uk**.