Parent and Carer Online Safety Update

Primary February 2026

As children begin exploring technology, it's natural for parents and carers to feel unsure about how to guide them. The online world can be exciting, creative and full of learning opportunities — but younger children need gentle support to build safe, confident habits. This newsletter offers simple, practical tips to help you navigate your child's digital life, from setting healthy routines to developing early digital resilience. Our aim is to empower you with clear, calm information so you can feel confident supporting your child as they learn, play and grow online.

Helping Younger Children Learn Safe and Confident Technology Habits

Primary-age children are growing up surrounded by digital devices — from tablets and smart speakers to educational apps and online videos. Technology can offer wonderful opportunities for learning and creativity, but children at this age are still developing the skills to recognise what's safe, what's confusing, and when to ask for help. This is why guided, shared use is so important.

Safe and confident technology habits begin with simple routines. Younger children benefit from exploring online spaces with an adult, so you can model how to pause, think, and make good choices. You might talk aloud while navigating a game or app — "Let's check what this button does," or "I wonder who made this video?" — to help them learn curiosity and caution in a calm way.

You can support your child by encouraging them to;

- ask before clicking
- keep personal information private
- talk to you about anything surprising confusing or scary
- understand that some online content is made to grab attention, not to tell the truth

If you'd like to explore this topic further:

- Childnet – AI & Online Safety: https://www.childnet.com
- Internet Matters – AI Guidance for Parents: https://www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC – Keeping Children Safe Online: https://www.nspcc.org.uk

These resources offer practical advice to help you support your child to grow into a confident and safe digital citizen.

AI Chatbots & Younger Children – What to Know

Some apps for younger children now include simple AI chatbots that answer questions or offer clues in games. These tools can be fun, but children may believe the chatbot is a real person or assume everything it says is correct. AI can sometimes provide misleading or inaccurate information, and may occasionally present content that isn't appropriate for children.

The best approach is to encourage children to use these tools with an adult, not alone. Let them know it's okay to ask questions and that trusted adults — not apps — are the best people to talk to when they need advice or reassurance.

Building Digital Resilience in Younger Children

Many parents tell us that the digital world can feel confusing or fast-moving — especially when children start exploring apps, games and videos independently. It's completely normal to feel unsure.

The reassuring news is that younger children build digital resilience most effectively through simple routines, gentle conversations and guided exploration.

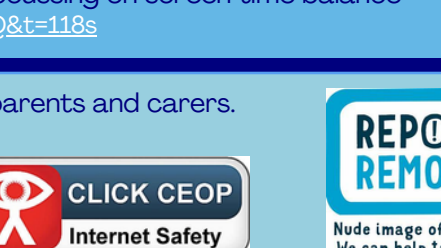
Children learn resilience when they feel able to tell you if something online surprises or worries them. Asking open questions like, "What did you like about that game?" or "Did anything feel a bit odd?" helps them talk about experiences confidently.

It's also helpful to explain that not everything online is real, and that some things are designed to persuade or tempt them.

Keep messages simple: ask an adult, don't share personal information, and come to me if something doesn't feel right.

Your calm presence and curiosity are the biggest factors in helping your child stay safe and confident online.

Understanding Screen Time Guidance



The World Health Organization (WHO) offers guidance to help families find a healthy balance, but these are not strict rules — they are flexible guidelines to support child development and wellbeing.

- Under 1 year - screen time is not recommended
- Under 2 years: No more than 1 hour per day, when engaging with reading, activities or chatting with a family member.
- Ages 2–5: No more than 1 hour per day of high-quality content, ideally watched together with an adult.
- Ages 6–17: WHO does not set a strict hourly limit but advises consistent boundaries so screen use does not interfere with sleep, physical activity, learning or social interaction.

A helpful routine is a "tech-off" wind-down hour before bedtime to support healthy sleep.

If you need advice and support around any aspect of your child's well being, including online safety you can get in touch with the Safeguarding Team at your academy.

DIGITAL WELLBEING FOR PRIMARY-AGE CHILDREN

For younger children, online time should feel fun, safe, and predictable. Research shows that too much screen use is linked with disrupted sleep and lower levels of physical activity in children. Keeping a balanced routine helps support their mood, confidence and behaviour.

Try building simple habits together such as taking breaks and mixing online time with outdoor play, reading or creative activities. Children also benefit from talking about how online activities make them feel — excited, worried, frustrated, or happy. This helps them learn to recognise when it's time to switch off or ask for help.

Building digital wellbeing at this age sets the foundation for safe and confident future online use.

Tips for Digital Resilience

- Use technology together whenever possible.
- Teach simple rules: ask before clicking, tell an adult, keep information private.
- Make space for offline play, rest and creativity.
- Have regular chats about what they enjoy online and what feels strange.
- Remind them that not everything online is real — pictures and videos can be made or changed.
- Create calm, predictable routines around screens, including wind-down time.

Something to watch with your child...

An entertaining and thought provoking 2 minute song and cartoon focussing on screen time balance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIujG-rYQvQ&t=118s

The following websites all contain useful sources of information for parents and carers. Click the image to access.

IWF Internet Watch Foundation | Childnet | NSPCC | CLICK CEOP Internet Safety | REPORT REMOVE – Nude image of you online? We can help take it down.