

The internet is a fantastic resource with amazing communication, entertainment and resource possibilities for young people. But just as there are places in every city and town that are unsafe or inappropriate for children and teenagers there are places online too. Microsoft is working to ensure that young people and those that care for them have the knowledge to stay safe and an understanding of what to do if things go wrong.

Below you will find relevant resources to signpost you to useful information on how you can help keep your children safe online.

The Technology

Below is a guide to the popular technology young people are using:

Technology	Use	Examples
Social Networking	Creation of personal online profile to then share photos and information with friends.	Facebook, Bebo, Myspace, Spaces
Instant Messaging	Direct online communication with 1 or more friends, often using 'text speak'	Windows Live Messenger, Yahoo Messenger
Chat Rooms	An online forum where people can chat online (talk by broadcasting messages to people on the same forum in real time)..	Habbo Hotel, Club Penguin, Yahoo Chat, UK Chatterbox.
Online Gaming	Opportunity to play online against multiple players from around the world, Many games now have the opportunity to chat to players also.	Wii, Xbox, Playstation all have online gaming capabilities

Safety Considerations

Whilst we recognise that the internet is a fantastic resource for young people we must remember that the same as in the real world, there can be potential dangers to consider:

Control- Personal Information can be easily accessed if it is posted online. Consider what information about your child someone could access online

Contact- Paedophiles use the internet to meet young people and build up a relationship. This is often done in a public environment such as a chat room or online game before trust is built up to become an online friend for 1-1 conversations.

Cyberbullying- This can utilise all forms of technology to bully a young person 24/7. By using online technology a bully can gain an instant and wide audience for their bullying. Cyberbullying can be threats and intimidation as well as harassment and peer rejection.

Content- The internet can contain inappropriate images of violence and pornography that you might be unhappy for your child to have access to.

Top Tips for Parents

By following some simple rules you can help keep your children safe:

- Keep your PC in an open space where possible to encourage communication
- Discuss the programs your children use
- Keep communication open with regards to who they are chatting to online
- Discuss their list of contacts and check they know all those they have accepted as friends
- Consider using the same technology so you can understand how it works.
- Talk to your children about keeping their information and photos private using privacy settings on sites such as Bebo and Facebook
- Teach your children what personal information is and that they shouldn't share it online with people they don't know
- Utilise Parental Controls where available. (Information on Parental Controls for Microsoft products can be found at www.microsoft.com/protect/family) These can allow you to control the amount of time your children are online, the sites they can access and the people they can talk to. These are available for many products including Windows 7, Vista, Xbox and Live.

Useful links for Parents

Microsoft site dedicated to safety information for you and your family:

www.microsoft.com/protect/family

Microsoft site dedicated to information on gaming safely with resources for children and parents:

www.getgamesmart.com

Child Exploitation and Online Protection site with information for parents:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

Website for Childnet charity who are dedicated to making the internet a safer place for children and providing advice:

www.childnet-int.org

Internet Watch Foundation site where you can report any illegal content on the Internet:

www.iwf.org.uk

How to Get Help

For Young People

There are people who can help and they can report the abuse online at www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse

They can also access this page through the Virtual Global Taskforce Icon on the Live Messenger Toolbar 

Children can talk to someone in confidence;

Childline on 0800 1111 which will not be listed on the telephone bill.

For Adults

Adults can speak to the Samaritans. The Samaritans provide confidential emotional support for people who are in emotional distress.

If you are worried, feel upset or confused and just want to talk.

You can: phone the Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90

email the Samaritans: Jo@samaritans.org