

Staying safe on mobiles, Smartphone's and tablets

Children can use mobiles or tablets anywhere – from their bedrooms to when they're out and about - so it can be tricky to keep track of what they're doing online. You may want to think about:

Location tracking

Smartphone's and tablets have a GPS (Global Positioning System) facility that shows their location. Some websites and apps like [Facebook](#) or [Yik Yak](#), can use this to publish the user's location. So when a young person posts a message or photo on a social network, their location may also be added. Location settings can also be used to find others close by - for example on dating or social networking apps.

Talk to your child about why they might want to use location settings and what the risks might be. You can also help them switch them off if necessary.

Taking and sending pictures

Cameras on Smartphone's and tablets let children take and send photos instantly. Sometimes this means they don't take a moment to think before they share images.

Sometimes children and young people use their Smartphone's and tablets for [sexting](#) – taking and sending explicit pictures of themselves. But as soon as they send the image to another person, they lose control over where and how that image is shared. Teach your child to be [Share Aware](#) and help keep them safe online.

Using the device too much

You might worry that your child uses mobile devices too much. Although they can be good for children's social lives, they can also stop them from talking to people face to face. There are also concerns about how they affect concentration, sleep patterns and eyesight for very young children.

The important thing is to get the balance of activities right. Agree the times that your child can go online, and avoid just before bedtime. Don't forget to think about your own online behaviour to help set a good example!

Setting up parental controls

Just like on a computer, you can use parental controls to restrict what your child can access when they're using a mobile or tablet to go online. Some providers offer different levels of control, that you can change based on your child's age. [Vodafone](#), [O2](#), [three](#) and [EE](#) all provide free parental control services.

Talk to your child about the sort of things you think are suitable for them to see. And explain to younger children that you've put controls on their devices to help to keep them safe.

Public WiFi



Public WiFi hotspots let users connect to the internet via a wireless network. You can find WiFi hotspots in places like coffee shops, libraries, and airports. But they're not always secure and they can allow children to search the internet free from controls.

Children could view adult content such as pornography and violence either by mistake or on purpose when using public WiFi. But family-friendly public WiFi schemes are becoming more common and some providers have signed up to providing family-friendly WiFi. Look out for the symbol when you're out and about.

Parent protection apps

Installing parent protection apps on your child's Smartphone or tablet can help you keep track of what they're getting up to. Features vary from app to app, but they include things like:

- alerting you if your child tries to access a blocked site
- Keeping a record of text messages they send and receive.

You can also set times when the device can and can't be used – for example, you could block your child's Smartphone or tablet during school hours and overnight.

Try to strike the right balance between keeping an eye on your child and giving them the independence and freedom to explore. Simply sheltering them from the online world might not help them in the long run. They need a chance to learn how to behave online, and find out what's out there.

Information from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>