



## Family *wisdom*

Every few weeks we provide advice, expectations and support around the foundations of good child development. The aim is to prepare our children for adulthood. These cover:

1. Listening and attention;
2. Sleep, exercise and diet;
3. Preventing children from seeing harm/trauma/ inappropriate TV or games;
4. Hygiene and personal care;
5. Boundaries and routines/assertive parenting;
6. Socialising.

*If you have a good idea or thought to contribute, please get in touch with us.*

## Online safety

If you're deciding whether (or when) to get your child a computer, tablet, smartphone or other online device, I recommend that you ask yourself these two simple questions:

- Are you ready for your child to have access **to the entire internet?**
- And are you ready for the entire internet to **have access to your child?**

If your answer is "no" to either of these questions, don't! *Please worry more about what your child does online than what they do down the park!*

### Staying safe

An important point you need to know is that your child will almost certainly experience something horrible online. In the last term we have had children receive sexual images over social media, use inappropriate sexual and racist language, and get caught playing on their consoles at 3am in the morning. IT DOES HAPPEN!

### How do I keep them safe?

**Be assertive (firm but fair). Have clear rules and guidelines, but listen and respond to your child's thoughts and feelings.**

#### **Proactively:**

- 1) Put boundaries in place around screen time and access to devices:
  - a) *How much is acceptable each day? 1 hr a day = 15 days a year. Do not let them have unlimited access.*
  - b) *Where? It's not a good idea to have consoles in bedrooms because addicted children will play on them when you are asleep. Have all screens in a public area.*
- 2) Put in parental controls. NSPCC advice [here](#).
- 3) Get them to show you what they are doing - and check regularly!

#### **Reactively:**

- 1) When things go wrong, they need to know they can speak to you. Praise them. Do not punish them!
- 2) Follow the NSPCC [advice](#), which includes a hotline you can call for help.

### **What do we teach them at school?**

The '4 Cs' help children consider, act and respond in a safe way:

- **CONTENT** – is this age appropriate? What do I do if it isn't? Be wary of hate, extremist or abusive content. *Lawful but awful content.*
- **CONTACT** – being engaged and at risk of a harmful interaction. The bad people are where your children are! Risk of exploitation and abuse. Recruitment to extremism or bullying.
- **CONDUCT** – showing the same respect online as you would do face to face. Sending images/sharing. Bullying. Hostile behaviour. Illegal downloading. Violent tendencies can be exacerbated.
- **COMMERCE** – online gambling, advertising, phishing and financial crimes. Look after your personal data. Be aware of scams.



## Have you considered the following?

- If you set rules that are too rigid for your child, they will rebel as a teenager. But if you don't set any boundaries, you are not teaching them how to stay safe.
- Children need to learn how to be bored and not occupied all the time. Lean into boredom and unleash their creativity in play and exploration in the real world.
- Social media creates an identity issue: there is a gap between real life and online which creates anxiety.
- What digital footprint are you/they leaving? This will be used in job interviews.....
- Porn is now the norm on the internet. 50% of primary school pupils and 94% of 14 year olds have seen porn. Ask your child what they have seen!
- Online bullying means there is no safe haven for children to escape abuse. Watch out for the signs this is happening to your child.
- Screen/internet addiction **is harder to kick than drugs** and has the same effect on the brain as coke/heroin.
  - Are you feeding this? More than 3 hours a day leads to more hyperactivity and emotional volatility.
- The internet culture is affecting delayed gratification: being able to wait for something. This is a good predictor of life chances.
- Children are growing up too quickly as they take part in a more sexualised world. There is also the huge commercial pressure to consume goods and services.

Depressed after reading this?! Remember LOVE is spelt T-I-M-E (spend quality time with them doing real world things) and but in consistent boundaries.

There is lots of advice out there for parents, and we have collated some it on our website here:

<https://st-peters-school.org.uk/parents/staying-safe-online-current-advice-for-parents/>