

A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives – Children's Commissioner

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/12/cc-what-i-wish-parent-guide.pdf>

Children of the 2020s: home learning environment and screen time at age 2

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695fc42241ddb40d13f76527/COT2020s -
_home_learning_environment_and_screen_time_at_age_2_-_research_brief.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695fc42241ddb40d13f76527/COT2020s_-_home_learning_environment_and_screen_time_at_age_2_-_research_brief.pdf)

Ofcom research – May 7th 2025

Children's media use and attitudes <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/media-habits-children/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2025>

Children's media use and attitudes – interactive data <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/media-habits-children/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2025--interactive-data>

Children's media lives <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/media-habits-children/childrens-media-lives>

Children's Passive Online Measurement (June 2025) <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/media-habits-children/childrens-passive-online-measurement>

Recent research on social media impact

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understand-the-impact-of-smartphones-and-social-media-on-children-and-young-people> (20th Jan 2026)

Spotlight on social media bans: A parent's guide <https://mollyrosefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/MRF-A-spotlight-on-social-media-bans-A-parents-guide.pdf> (Jan 2026)

Understanding the impact of news on children's wellbeing

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/research/impact-online-news-childrens-wellbeing>

How the social media debate on teen mental health is missing the point

<https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news-events/how-the-social-media-debate-on-teen-mental-health-is-missing-the-point/>

Adolescents with mental health conditions use social media differently than their peers, study suggests <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news-events/adolescents-with-mental-health-conditions-use-social-media-differently-than-their-peers-study-suggests/>

Minor's health and social media <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC141090>

Online safety guidance for parents

Internet Matters (a one-stop-shop for parents: online issues, advice by age, setting controls, guides and resources <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Digital Matters – a resource for parents and teachers https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-matters/modules/?user_type=parent

Childnet (includes guidance in different languages) <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

CEOP <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

National Cyber Security Centre <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/individuals-families>

Teens, social media and you <https://mediasmart.uk.com/tiktok-teens-social-media-and-you/>

Ofcom – protecting children from harms online – information for parents
<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/protecting-children/how-ofcom-is-helping-children-to-be-safer-online-a-guide-for-parents>

Sharenting <https://www.protechthem.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/424/2025/08/Briefing-for-parents-Aug-29.pdf>

Reviewing apps and games

<https://familygamingdatabase.com> and <https://www.common sense media.org/> and
<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/apps-guide/>
<https://www.askaboutgames.com/>

Reporting a problem

A national reporting centre (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for harmful content online
<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>

Internet Watch Foundation (UK Hotline) for reporting illegal content online – child sexual abuse images <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

How to report suspicious emails (NCSC) report@phishing.gov.uk

Report remove tool for nude images (under 18) <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/remove-nude-image-shared-online/>

Take It Down – tool to proactively hash nude images <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/>

Cybersecurity – NCSC <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/individuals-families>

Check a website - <https://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite/>

Younger children

Child friendly search - <https://www.kids-search.com/> and <http://www.swiggle.org.uk/>

Storybooks - [Old Macdonald had a phone](#) [Troll Stinks](#) [#Goldilocks](#) [Chicken Clicking](#)

AI

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/parent-guide-to-artificial-intelligence-ai-tools> and
https://www.unicef.org/innovation/sites/unicef.org/innovation/files/2018-11/Children%20and%20AI_Short%20Version%20%283%29.pdf

Exploring AI with children and young people <https://knowledge.barnardos.ie/items/41a7f9c5-07f8-4c3f-9fce-c1fd69e41a24>

Viewing Gen AI and children's safety in the round (NSPCC – Jan 2025)
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2025/generative-ai-childrens-safety>

AI chatbot concerns <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/ai-chatbots-and-companions-risks-to-children-and-young-people>

<https://mashable.com/article/ai-companions-for-teens-unsafe>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/ai-chatbots-and-virtual-friends-how-parents-can-keep-children-safe/>

AI and nude images – conversation starters <https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/AI-and-nude-images-advice-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>

AI companions <https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Me-Myself-AI-Report.pdf>

https://www.commonsemmedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/teens-trust-and-technology-in-the-age-of-ai_v2_web.pdf

Understanding the impact of AI on our kids <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/ai>

Talk, trust and trade-offs – how and why teens use AI companions (July 2025)
https://www.commonsemmedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/talk-trust-and-trade-offs_2025_web.pdf

Other useful resources/research

Children’s Commissioner – Young people and pornography
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/a-lot-of-it-is-actually-just-abuse-young-people-and-pornography> and <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/pornography-and-harmful-sexual-behaviour/> and <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/sex-is-kind-of-broken-now-children-and-pornography/>

Children’s Commissioner – *I’ve seen horrible things – children’s experiences of the online world*
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/ive-seen-horrible-things-childrens-experiences-of-the-online-world/>

<https://5rightsfoundation.com/in-action/new-research-shows-children-directly-targeted-with-graphic-content-within-as-little-as-24-hours-of-creating-an-online-social-media-account.html>

Over 100 research summaries from the UKCIS evidence group www.saferinternet.org.uk/research

deShame - <http://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame/research> (young people’s experience of sexual harassment online)

Not just flirting <https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/2022/06/23/not-just-flirting/>

Preventable yet pervasive (research from Molly Rose Foundation) (Nov 2023)
<https://mollyrosefoundation.org/resources/online-safety>

Pervasive by design (MRF August 2025) https://mollyrosefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/proof3_PervasivebyDesign.pdf

YouTube’s anorexia algorithm (CCDH) <https://counterhate.com/research/youtube-anorexia-algorithm/>

What role does social media play in violence affecting young people? (YouGov)
<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2024/social-media/>

YouTube

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/myfamily/>

YouTube – [supervised experience](#)

5 Rights

<https://twisted-toys.com/>

Age appropriate design code (ICO)

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-data-protection-themes/age-appropriate-design-a-code-of-practice-for-online-services-2-1.pdf>

Roblox

<https://corp.roblox.com/parents>

TikTok

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/account-and-user-safety/user-safety>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/tiktok-privacy-and-safety-settings/>

Instagram

<https://familycenter.instagram.com/dashboard/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/instagram/>

<https://about.instagram.com/community/teen-accounts>

Snapchat

<https://snap.com/en-GB/safety/family-center>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/snapchat/>

<https://values.snap.com/en-GB/news/introducing-content-controls-on-family-center>

Resources for children with SEND

THRIVE from Childnet <https://www.childnet.com/what-we-do/our-projects/thrive-online/>

Internet Matters - inclusive digital safety <https://www.internetmatters.org/inclusive-digital-safety/>

Changing conversations <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/changing-conversations-empowering-vulnerable-children-digital-world/>

Parental controls

Schools Mobile <https://schoolsmobile.com> and <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls>



Harmblock handset

Stories for younger children

[Old Macdonald had a phone](#) [Troll Stinks](#) [#Goldilocks](#) [Chicken Clicking](#)

Government scheme of work/curriculum for online safety

Education for a connected world <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-a-connected-world>

Online safety bill <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/information-for-industry/roadmap-to-regulation>

AI <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/frontier-ai-capabilities-and-risks-discussion-paper>

Parental controls for Kindle

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=GG2LBLE5V2T8XUX8>

Mobile phones / screentime

Excellent overview of the current arguments for and against smartphones – September 2025

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/jonathan-haidt-anxious-generation-right-about-smartphones>

Statement from the LSE on phones/social media bans <https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online/bans>

Are young people really the anxious generation? <https://observer.co.uk/culture/books/article/great-rewiring-or-moral-panic-are-young-people-really-the-anxious-generation>

Mobile phone guidance (DfE) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

Screen time : impacts on education and wellbeing <https://digitalyouth.ac.uk/screen-time-impacts-on-education-and-wellbeing/>

Internet access linked to higher wellbeing <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c89z2v0pjl3o>

Is there a middle way on smartphones? <https://www.ft.com/content/c122775a-f664-4c06-90c2-eba077367757>

<https://reason.com/video/2024/04/02/the-bad-science-behind-jonathan-haidts-anti-social-media-crusade/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/apr/27/anxious-generation-jonathan-haidt>

Ian Russell <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/30/children-safe-online-change-tech-companies-social-media>

Do smartphones really cause mental illness among adolescents? Ten problems with Jonathan Haidt's book <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2024/05/15/haidt/>

APA – Recommendations for healthy teen video viewing <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/apa-adolescent-video-consumption-recommendations.pdf>

Video - Jonathan Haidt & Candice Odgers <https://tyde.virginia.edu/event/haidt-odgers/>

one sec – app to help reduce screentime <https://one-sec.app/>

Center for humane technology <https://www.humanetech.com/>

Adolescence

Netflix's Adolescence: Young people, the Manosphere, and the non-discriminating influence of violent misogyny <https://connectfutures.org/resources/netflixs-adolescence-young-people-the-manosphere-and-the-non-discriminating-influence-of-violent-misogyny/>

Incels, chads, misogyny and problematic terrorism overlaps: A young person's perspective <https://connectfutures.org/resources/incels-chads-misogyny-and-problematic-terrorism-overlaps-a-young-persons-perspective/>

<https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/adolescence-netflix-6654519-Mar2025/>

<https://www.webwise.ie/news/7-things-parents-can-do-after-watching-adolescence/>

UK Chief Medical Officers' advice for parents and carers on Children and Young People's screen and social media use

Technology can be a wonderful thing but too much time sitting down or using mobile devices can get in the way of important, healthy activities. Here are some tips for balancing screen use with healthy living.

Sleep matters

Getting enough, good quality sleep is very important. Leave phones outside the bedroom when it is bedtime.



Sharing sensibly

Talk about sharing photos and information online and how photos and words are sometimes manipulated. Parents and carers should never assume that children are happy for their photos to be shared. For everyone – when in doubt, don't upload!



Education matters

Make sure you and your children are aware of, and abide by, their school's policy on screen time.



Keep moving!

Everyone should take a break after a couple of hours sitting or lying down using a screen. It's good to get up and move about a bit. #sitlessmovement



Safety when out and about

Advise children to put their screens away while crossing the road or doing an activity that needs their full attention.



Talking helps

Talk with children about using screens and what they are watching. A change in behaviour can be a sign they are distressed – make sure they know they can always speak to you or another responsible adult if they feel uncomfortable with screen or social media use.



Family time together

Screen-free meal times are a good idea – you can enjoy face-to-face conversation, with adults giving their full attention to children.



Use helpful phone features

Some devices and platforms have special features – try using these features to keep track of how much time you (and with their permission, your children) spend looking at screens or on social media.

