Parents - Talk to your children about Online Safety and Cybercrime

Children and young people spend a lot of time online – it can be a great way for them to socialise, explore and have fun. To be noted: children do also face risks such as cyberbullying or seeing content that's inappropriate.

That's why it's important for them to know how to stay safe online - whether you're unsure about what happens online or are up to speed with new technology, it's important that you talk to your child about staying safe.

It may feel daunting, but you don't need to be an expert on the internet - understanding what children do online and the risks they face will help you keep your child safe online.

Talk about what might be OK for children of different ages - ask your child what sites or apps they like. Write a list, and look at them together.

Be positive about what you see - but also be open about concerns you have: *"I think this site's really good"* or *"I'm a little worried about things I've seen here".*

Talk to your child about what you think is appropriate – but also involve them in the conversation. Ask what they think is OK for children of different ages – they'll feel involved in the decision-making.

Be aware - that your child might talk about friends who use apps or visit sites that you've decided aren't suitable.

Be ready to discuss your reasons - but recognise that they may not agree with you. Listen carefully for the reasons why.

Go through a final list of sites you both agree are OK - and work out when you'll next discuss it.

Ask your child if they know:

1.   Where reporting functions are?
2.   How to block someone?
3.   How to keep information private?

Talk about things they might see online which make them feel uncomfortable

Ask about things they, or their friends, have seen that made them feel uncomfortable:

- **Be specific** - what exactly made them feel uncomfortable and why? Is it people or animals being hurt? , or nasty comments about others?

- **Link these to things in the real world** - and explain that you're always here to protect and help them online.

- **Reassure your child that they can always talk** - to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

- **Show them how to report or block on the sites and apps they use** - use **Net Aware** to find out how.

- **Tell them you'll help them to report -** anything upsetting they've seen, or to deal with online bullying.

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