

PRIMARY EDITION

DIGITAL FAMILIES

STARTING SAFE ONLINE

Simple steps for safer, happier online experiences -
Online safety | Autumn 1 2026



A MESSAGE FOR FAMILIES - Children use technology to learn, play, watch videos and stay in touch. You do not need to know everything about every app. The most helpful starting point is to stay interested, talk regularly and make it easy for your child to ask for help.

THIS HALF TERM: 5 SIMPLE ACTIONS

1. **Explore together.** Ask your child to show you a favourite game, video channel or app. Let them explain what they enjoy and who they interact with.
2. **Check privacy and age settings.** Review the settings together. Check who can contact your child, what others can see and whether location sharing is switched on.
3. **Agree a few clear routines.** Choose simple rules that work for your family, such as devices charging outside bedrooms, asking before downloading and taking regular breaks.
4. **Talk about sharing.** Remind your child to pause before sharing a photo, video, name, school, location or other personal information.
5. **Keep the door open.** Tell your child they can come to you if something feels wrong. Reassure them that asking for help will not automatically mean losing their device.

TRY SAYING THIS: "Show me something you enjoy online. What makes it fun, and is there anything that sometimes makes it difficult?" The aim is not one big conversation. Short, calm check-ins are often easier for everyone.

POSSIBLE SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY NEED SUPPORT

Changes around devices: They may become unusually secretive, upset after going online, or reluctant to use a device they normally enjoy.

Problems with sleep or routines: Notifications, late-night use or worries about messages may make it harder to switch off.

Friendship difficulties: Online disagreements can continue into school and may involve group chats, gaming or shared images.

Unexpected account activity: New contacts, password changes, unfamiliar purchases or messages sent from their account may need checking.

REMEMBER: One sign does not automatically mean that something serious has happened. Choose a calm moment, describe what you have noticed and ask an open question.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

1. **Stay calm and listen.** Thank your child for telling you. Avoid blame and do not rush into taking the device away.
2. **Check immediate safety.** If there is a threat of harm or an urgent safeguarding concern, contact the appropriate emergency or safeguarding service.
3. **Keep useful evidence.** Where appropriate, save usernames, links, dates and screenshots. Do not repeatedly view or share harmful material.
4. **Use in-app tools.** Block, mute and report accounts or content. Review privacy and security settings afterwards.
5. **Contact the school** if you require further support or advice.

Where to get help and advice about online safety

You're not alone - support is always available!

THINK UK KNOW Thinkuknow / CEOP Online child protection advice for families. thinkuknow.co.uk	Childline Free, confidential support for children and young people. Call 0800 1111 Chat online at childline.org.uk	IWF Internet Watch Foundation Report Remove Report an image or video of an under-18 shared without consent. reportremove.iwf.org.uk
NCA National Crime Agency CEOP Report where an image may have been shared with an adult. ceop.police.uk	NSPCC NSPCC Helpline Advice and support for parents and carers. 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk nspcc.org.uk	Speak to your child's school Staff can advise and refer to specialist support if needed.

A HELPFUL CONVERSATION PROMPT:
"What happened, how did it make you feel, and what would help now?"
Small conversations make a big difference.

Tips to keep talking and checking

- Discuss where your child encounters AI tools and what they enjoy using.
- Remind them not everything online is real.
- Use parental controls as support, not a replacement for conversation.
- Review screen time and sleep routines.

Trusted resources for parents and carers

- Common Sense Media**
Independent reviews, advice and age ratings.
commonsensemedia.org
- YouTube Kids**
Safer, age-appropriate content and settings.
youtube.com/kids
- Childnet**
First Phone Checklist
Helpful tips for when your child gets their first phone.
childnet.com

Sources: Informed by #WakeUpWednesday / National Online Safety / The National College and the UK Safer Internet Centre.
nationalcollege.com/institutions/national-online-safety | saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers

Working together for a safer online world