



Online Safety Advice for Parents & Carers



This leaflet offers practical, reassuring tips that address the concerns raised by families in our recent survey.



OF FIVE ASHES, FRANT, MARK CROSS AND MAYFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

WITH GOD'S LOVE WE GROW AND LEARN TOGETHER

Executive Headteachers: Mrs J Challis and Miss J Warren

1. Keeping Children Safe from Strangers, Scams & Unsafe Chats

What worries parents:

Strangers contacting children, unsafe chat functions on games, scams, and manipulative behaviour online.

What you can do:

Keep games and chatting apps in **shared family spaces**, not bedrooms.

Teach your child:

- Never reply to messages from people they don't know.
- Tell an adult straight away if something "feels wrong, weird, or upsetting."
Use **parental controls** to restrict chat functions or limit them to approved friends.
- Remind them never to share personal information—no names, school, photos, or locations.
- Help them practise simple responses such as "I can't talk to people I don't know online."

2. Protecting Children from Inappropriate or Harmful Content

What worries parents:

Accidental exposure to unsuitable videos, images, or adult content; misleading information; deepfakes.

What you can do:

- Turn on **SafeSearch** on all devices. You can use 'Swiggle' as a safer search engine <https://swiggle.org.uk/>
- Use child-friendly platforms (YouTube Kids, BBC iPlayer Kids, etc.).
- Check PEGI age ratings on games.
- Show children how to close a tab and get help if they see something upsetting.
- Talk openly about how images and videos can be edited, fake, or misleading.

3. Managing Screen Time, Meltdowns & Healthy Balance

What worries parents:

Addiction, difficulty turning devices off, screen-time behaviours, sleep issues.

What you can do:

Create family routines such as:

- No screens during meals
- 1 hour tech-free before bedtime
- Device-free bedrooms
- Use timers your child can see—this makes transitions easier.
- Plan "off-screen" activities to make stopping more appealing.
- Praise healthy choices ("I love how you stopped when the timer went off!").
- Model balance—your own habits matter too.



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4. Building Your Child's Critical Thinking Skills

What worries parents:

Misinformation, children believing everything they see, AI-generated fake content, lack of critical thinking.

What you can do:

Ask questions like:

- "Who made this?"
- "Is it trying to make you click something?"
- "Could this be edited or fake?"
- Look at content together and talk about emotional impact.
- Help your child understand when AI tools may give answers that are wrong or invented.
- Encourage checking information against trusted sources.

5. Understanding AI & Using It Safely

What worries parents:

Deepfakes, persuasive chatbots, environmental impact, over-reliance for homework.

What you can do:

- Treat AI like a calculator for ideas, not a replacement for thinking.
- Supervise any use of AI tools - especially for younger children.
- Talk about why AI sometimes makes mistakes or creates false images.
- Teach children to fact-check before believing anything generated by AI.
- Use age-appropriate AI tools only (if at all) and discuss privacy.

6. Supporting Emotional Wellbeing Online

What worries parents:

Online comparisons, influencers, bullying, children feeling left out, photos affecting self-esteem.

What you can do:

- Remind your child that people only post the "perfect bits"—not real life.
- Talk regularly about kindness online and how to message respectfully.
- Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult if someone is unkind
- Praise your child for showing kindness online and offline.
- Delay social media until they show maturity and emotional readiness.



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7. Knowing What Your Child Uses Online

What worries parents:

Not always knowing what apps do, children using technology at friends' houses, hidden features in apps.

What you can do:

- Ask your child to show you their favourite games and apps—be curious, not critical.
- Set apps so your approval is required before downloading.
- Keep devices where you can glance at screens.
- Use family-sharing or child profiles to monitor activity safely.
- Stay alert to device use outside your home (playdates, clubs, travelling).

8. How School Helps - and How You Can Use That Support

Parents asked for:

Regular guidance, information about apps used in school, assemblies, sessions for families, reassurance about filters.

How we support you:

- Regular newsletters explaining apps, trends, games and risks
- Clear communication about online tools used in school
- Strong filtering and monitoring on school devices
- Assemblies and lessons teaching online kindness, digital footprints, fact-checking, and AI understanding
- Parent information sessions

You can:

- Ask us if you're unsure
- Let us know if you need help with parental controls or device setup.
- Share concerns early so we can spot patterns or support your child.

If Your Child Sees Something Worrying Online

1. **Stop** – turn off the screen or put the device down.
2. **Press Pause (breathe)** – remind themselves they are safe.
3. **Tell** – speak to a trusted adult straight away.

Useful Links for Parents

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [NSPCC / Childline](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [National College](#)

If you have any further questions or need additional support, please reach out to someone at school or speak to a member of the DSL team.



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