



British Council
Partner Schools

Digital Life Hacks for Parents and Carers





Introduction

British Council Partner Schools is a global community of over 2,000 schools, actively supported by the British Council, delivering UK international qualifications such as the IGCSE and A Levels. We support Partner Schools by providing a secure, compliant and consistent exams delivery service, dedicated account management support, and professional development and training support for teachers and school leaders. We represent their needs to awarding bodies, universities and ministries of education, influencing change on their behalf. Our support enables schools to make a difference to young lives in local communities, across the world.

The British Council is committed to working with its partners to develop a common understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues and good practice in keeping children safe in line with our global safeguarding strategy. British Council Partner Schools offers support to partner schools through online safeguarding and child protection awareness and cyber well-being training.

The impact of the global pandemic combined with the fast-changing landscape of the internet and social media presents opportunities and challenges for the whole school community to consider. The British Council has collaborated with the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) to produce three e-safety brochures to support schools, parents and young people. Our aim is to support young people in becoming responsible digital citizens and in doing so, create a safer internet.

The South West Grid for Learning is a UK charity that has been working with schools and other organisations to protect children online for over 20 years. Through its innovative services, resources and support, SWGfL has developed an international reputation for supporting online safety and this has been recognised through numerous awards. SWGfL is a founding member of UK Council for Internet Safety and works with governments, technology providers and partners across the world. Since 2010, SWGfL has led the UK Safer Internet Centre, alongside partners Childnet and the Internet Watch Foundation, as part of the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme.



DIGITAL FAMILY

Childhood is changing. Young people are making friends, playing and learning online. From smartphones to smart speakers, technology is incorporated into every part of our lives. How can your family use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively?

**THIS LEAFLET HAS SOME QUICK TIPS AND
DIGITAL LIFE HACKS - FOR PARENTS AND CARERS.**

DIGITAL LIFE HACKS

1: ENCOURAGE A BALANCED LIFESTYLE

What online activities help your child to have fun, learn, create and socialise online? What would be a good mix of online and offline activities? Ensure they take a regular break from online activities and avoid using screens in the hour before bedtime.

2: SAFE CHAT AND INFLUENCE

Who is your child talking to online? Help your children identify good online role models.

3: REPUTATION MATTERS

Is your child comfortable with information about them being shared by you or other people? Can you help older children develop a positive online identity? Search for family members' names online within speech marks e.g. "Oliver Smith" and see what results come up.

4: SHARE YOUR STANDARDS

Privacy settings can help protect children online at home. But there are other ways children can access

online services. Share your standards with other adults in your child's life. This includes extended family and their friends' parents.

5: HOW TO REPORT AN ISSUE

Have fun with your children online, so that if there is a problem, they will come to you. Talk to them about what will happen if they report an issue to you.

6: BE A DIGITAL ROLE MODEL

How can you model the online behaviour you would like from your child? Would your posts pass the re-billboard test (if you put your posts on a billboard outside your house)? If you were a child, would you be happy with your parent's online behaviour? If not, make a change.

7: WRITE A FAMILY AGREEMENT... AND STICK TO IT!

Agree to a set of ground rules for online behaviour. This helps everyone in the family use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.





CONNECTED LIVES

What does it mean to 'go online'? Some people might say they are always connected to the internet. What impact does this have?

THE CONNECTED HOME

At home, you may have a fast internet connection, allowing you to stream TV programmes, videos or music. You may have a home heating system or appliance that you can control using an app. Your child may have their own tablet, smartphone or internet-connected toy.

THE CONNECTED HUMAN

We use our hands to operate a keyboard and mouse, and touch screens. We can speak to a smart speaker. We may wear a device that counts our steps and tracks heartbeat, sleep and other health measurements.

KEEPING US CONNECTED

Technology companies use clever techniques to keep adults and children on screen. For example, when a video service auto plays the next one. It can be particularly difficult for children to disconnect.

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #1: ENCOURAGE A BALANCED LIFESTYLE

What online activities help your child to have fun, learn, create and socialise online?
What would be a good mix of online and offline activities?

Ensure they take a regular break from online activities and avoid using screens in the hour before bedtime.





ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Young people have many options for communicating online. This could be on social media, messaging apps, in games or live video chat.

Many social media, messaging and chat apps have a minimum age of 13. You may see age ratings for games and apps which show the minimum age the content is suitable for. But there is always some risk in using any app or game which allows to chat with other users.

Children may follow their favourite celebrities, gamers and influencers online. This could be on video streaming services or social media.

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #2: SAFE CHAT AND INFLUENCE

Who is your child talking to online?
Can you help them identify good online role models?





WHO IS MY CHILD ONLINE?

What could someone else find out about your child from searching online? Is their online reputation helpful for future education and job opportunities? How would your child want to be perceived by their friends, family and local community?

Perhaps your child has shared information about themselves online. Do they have a public profile in a game or on social media? Have they shared personal information with strangers? Have they criticised or gossiped about other people online?

What have you posted online about your child? This could be childhood photos or funny stories. Could a fraudster find out your child's date of birth e.g. from a birthday photo? Could someone identify your child's school, or where they live?

Has someone else tagged your child in a photograph, or talked about your child online? Have you or your child said something in a private message or group which someone else has made public?

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #3: REPUTATION MATTERS

Is your child comfortable with information about them being shared by you or other people? Can you help older children develop a positive online identity? Search for family members' names online within speech marks e.g. "Oliver Smith" and see what results come up.





TECH TOOL CHECKLIST

Here's a handy checklist of technology tips to help protect your family online.

FILTER OUT THE BAD STUFF

Your internet service provider may provide the ability to block inappropriate content. E.g. to prevent pornography on your home broadband service, or on a smartphone contract. But children could access this content through friends or when visiting other relatives.

MAKE DEVICES, GAMES AND APPS CHILD-FRIENDLY

Use the parental controls on all devices used by your child. This can prevent access to age-gated games, spending money online, or using the device at night. Some games and apps include parental controls, e.g. to prevent in-game chatting.

PROTECT YOUR DATA AND PRIVACY

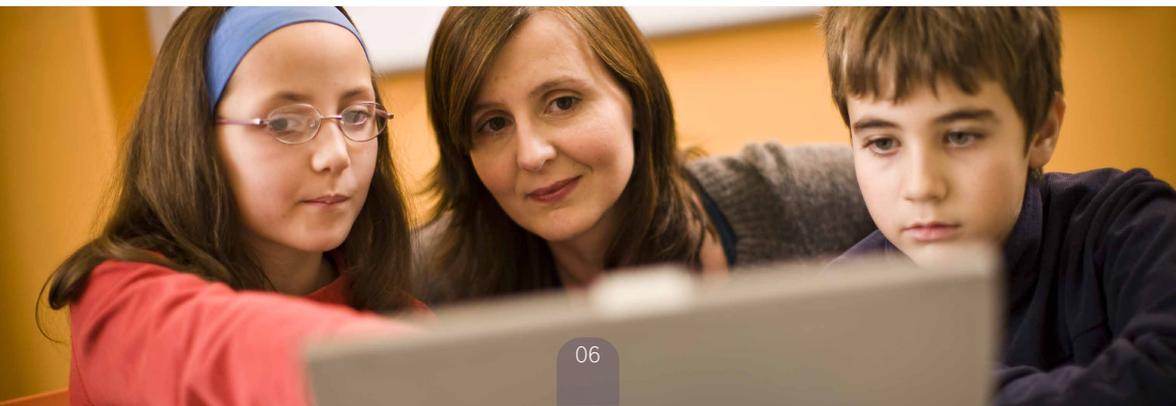
Ensure your anti-virus and malware software is up to date on all devices. Check for software updates and use available parental controls. Set privacy settings on all social media accounts e.g. whether the public or friends can see what you post.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PASSWORDS

Longer passwords take longer to crack, so choose 3 random words. If an internet-connected device has a default password, change it. Use a different password for every service (use a password-manager if you can't remember them all). Use multi-factor authentication – e.g. you need a special code on your phone as well as a password to log in.

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #4: SHARE YOUR STANDARDS

Technical settings can help protect children online at home. But there are other ways children can access online services. Share your standards with other adults in your child's life. This includes extended family and their friends' parents.





REPORTING A PROBLEM

Technology can be a source of conflict at home. Family conversations can focus on telling children to switch their devices off or to be careful online. Children may be less likely to report a problem to parents, if they think they'll have a negative reaction. They might worry their parents will confiscate their device or ban certain apps.

How can you encourage more positive conversations?

One way is to get involved in your child's online world.

Can you use fun apps and games together?

Can they talk to you about what they do online?

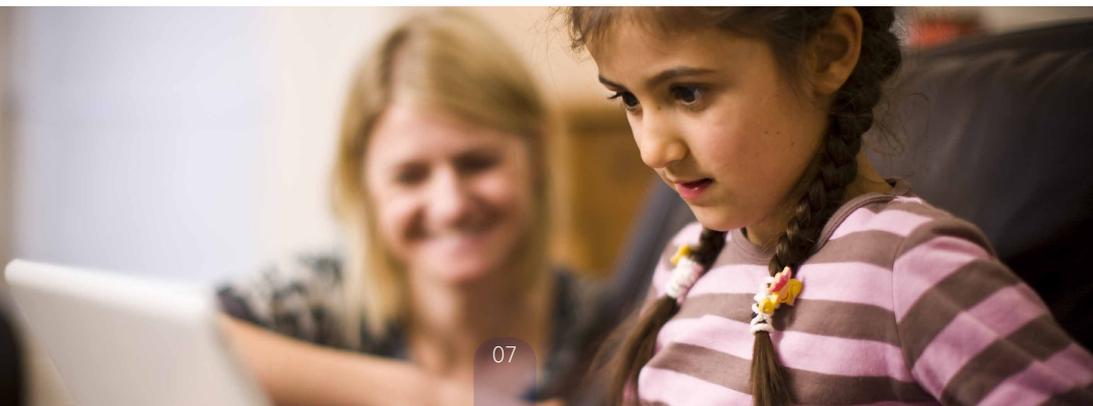
Would you know what to do, if your child had a problem online?

You should report illegal online content to the relevant authority. If something online worries you (but it is not illegal), you can report it to the service provider. Take a look at their community guidance or service terms and conditions first. If you are not satisfied with their response, you can report the issue to

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com>

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #5: KNOW HOW TO REPORT

Have fun with your children online, so that if there is a problem, they will come to you.
Talk to them about what will happen if they report an issue to you.





DIGITAL PARENT

Children notice how the adults in their lives behave. They learn about appropriate online behaviour by seeing how adults behave around technology. Are you a positive digital role model?

Adults may expect children to act in a way that is very different to their own behaviour online. For example, younger children may be ignored by an adult who is engrossed in a smartphone. Older children may see their parents or carers sharing inappropriate content online.

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #6: BE A DIGITAL ROLE MODEL

How can you model the online behaviour you would like from your child?
Your children need your time and attention – do they compete with your technology?

Would your posts pass the billboard test (if you put your posts on a billboard outside your house)?

If you were your child, would you be happy with your online behaviour? If not, make a change.





FAMILY AGREEMENT

A Family Agreement is a great way to bring together all the tips in this booklet, and to talk as a family about technology.

Things to include in your conversation:

- How adults and children can use technology together for fun
- When, where and for how long technology can be used by every member of the family e.g. can it be used at the dinner table?
- Which online services are good to use and which are not
- Which online behaviours are encouraged, and which are not appropriate
- How parents will monitor children's online activity
- What to do if there is an online problem
- Sanctions for any family member who breaks the rules
- The digital life hacks contained in this booklet

DIGITAL LIFE HACK #7:

WRITE A FAMILY AGREEMENT...AND STICK TO IT!

Agree to a set of ground rules for online behaviour. This helps everyone in the family use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.



