

Digital Parenting

What Can You Do To Help Keep Your Children Safe Online?



Talk Early and Often

Initiate regular discussions about your child's online activities. Treat their digital interactions with the same importance as real-life ones. Discuss online friendships, privacy, and appropriate behaviour.



Stay Informed

Understand the platforms they use, the content they engage with and the online games they play. Refer to resources such as [ISPPC's guide to Social Media platforms](#) to stay updated.



Understanding Age Restrictions: Legal and Safety Implications

Under GDPR, the digital age of consent in Ireland is 16. This means platforms must obtain parental consent to process data for users under this age. Children under 13 should not have social media accounts. Ensure your child's online activities comply with age restrictions to protect their privacy and well-being. These are adult platforms, and your children need to be fully aware of what they are engaging with.



Implement Healthy Screen Time Limits

Consider specific times when devices are turned off, for example during meals and before bedtime. Leverage parental control features on devices and apps to monitor and limit screen time (see next page).



Encourage critical thinking

Teach children to question everything they see online. Encourage them to ask, "Who created this?" and "Why was this shared?" Create a safe space where they can discuss uncomfortable situations and anything they may have experienced online.



Navigating Political Content and Online Influences

Social media can expose children to extreme political views. Be proactive in discussing current events and diverse perspectives. Watch the news with your children to engage with them and have critical discussions of what is happening in the world around them.

Platform-Specific Parental Controls

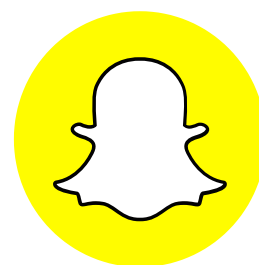


TikTok – Family Pairing Features

TikTok's Family Pairing allows parents to link their account to their teen's, providing tools, for example to, manage screen time, restrict your teen's exposure to certain content, or restrict direct messaging. The "Time Away" feature, enables parents to schedule breaks during specific times like family meals or bedtime. Learn more about how to set up Family Pairing [here](#).

Snapchat – Family Center

Snapchat's Family Center allows parents to see who their teens are friends with, who they are communicating with, set content controls and help you to easily and confidentially report any accounts you may be concerned about. This feature is designed to respect teens' privacy while providing parents with insights to prompt safety conversations. Learn more about Snapchat's Family Center [here](#).



Instagram's Teen Accounts

Instagram has introduced "Teen Accounts" for users under 18, which are private by default and include features like restricted messaging and content filters to automatically hide potentially offensive comments. Parents can set up supervision tools to monitor messaging activity and manage screen time. Teens under 16 require their parents permission to change default settings like making their account public or adjusting content controls. Learn more about Teen Accounts [here](#).

YouTube – Supervised Experience and YouTube Kids

YouTube offers a supervised experience for parents to manage their child's content access, with options to choose content settings based on the child's age. YouTube Kids provides a more controlled environment with curated content suitable for younger audiences. Learn more about the differences [here](#).



WhatsApp – Privacy Settings

While WhatsApp doesn't have dedicated parental controls, you can help change your child's privacy settings to control who can see their profile information and add them to groups. By default, WhatsApp sets your privacy settings that any user with your number can see your profile photo, when you're online and they can also add you to groups. It's recommended to change all Privacy settings to "My Contacts..." or stricter and similarly change group settings to "My Contacts..." or stricter to prevent unknown contacts from adding your child to groups.



These tools are designed to foster open conversations between you and your children about digital safety. It's recommended that you regularly engage with them about their online activities and use these features to create a safer online environment for them.