

# Online Safety

Mrs Tong is Designated Safeguarding Lead in school and in charge of Online Safety.

In school, we have RM SafetyNet filter and Smoothwall monitoring systems to protect children online. We use Purple Mash and National Online Safety (via the National College) to support our Online Safety Lessons. We also have trained Digital Leaders from upper key stage two who support classes across school.

When children are in years 5 and 6 they are allowed to bring a mobile phone into school. A mobile phone agreement must be signed by the parent or carer. Children from Reception to Year 4 are not allowed to bring their phone into school unless there are special circumstances.

## **Many of us see our online lives and offline lives as different.**

But for children growing up with technology and the internet, there isn't a difference – online life and offline life is just life.

Technology can move at an extraordinarily fast pace. So it can be difficult to know how to start talking to your child about what they're doing online, who they might be speaking to or discussing the potential risks and issues.

**Ensure you check your child's devices and any messaging apps that they have regularly.**

## **Starting the conversation**

Talking regularly with your child can help keep them safe online. Making it part of daily conversation, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed. It also means when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you.

But it's easy to become overwhelmed with the different technology, the language that children use, the huge number of games and apps which are available and the potential risks.

## **Age-appropriate conversations**

Considering your children's age and ability will help you decide how to speak to them.

### **For under-11s**

- Resources like [Talk PANTS](#) and [Techosaurus](#) will help.
- Make sure you're using language they can understand.
- If you suspect [grooming](#) or [exploitation](#), you can [report this directly to CEOP](#).

## **Important Links**

# Online Safety

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

## Online safety tips, quizzes and more via the NSPCC

[Online safety top tips](#) (PDF, 96KB)

Family agreement:

[Interactive PDF](#) (185KB)

[Printable PDF](#) (156KB)

[Online safety word search](#) (PDF, 152KB)

Online safety quiz:

[Interactive PDF](#) (217KB)+++++

[Printable PDF](#) (184KB)

[Family games night activity](#) (PDF, 567KB)

## What is the Online Safety Act?

The Online Safety Act became law in October 2023. Its goal is to make the internet safer for everyone (particularly children) by placing more responsibility on social media platforms and other online companies to protect their users.

Who does the act affect?

Online services, such as:

- Services that host user-generated content (e.g. social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram)
- Search engines (e.g. Google and Bing)
- Services that host pornographic content
- Messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp)
- Video-sharing platforms (established in the UK)

This is covered in Ofcom's guidance on [online safety – what is Ofcom's role, and what does it mean for you?](#)

There are no new requirements for schools

The act doesn't mention schools. This may change over the next year if the DfE updates any guidance in light of the act. We'll update you if the situation changes (select 'save for later' in the top right-hand corner of this article to be notified when we do).

## It's not entirely in force, yet

Although the act has been passed and the majority of the criminal offences (see below) are now in force, we're waiting for Ofcom (the UK communications regulator) and the secretary of state to write the guidance and the secondary legislation that will underpin the act.

Ofcom has been consulting on secondary legislation over the course of 2024, and is currently holding a consultation on its [draft children's safety codes of practice](#).

The draft codes propose that user-to-user and search services will be expected to have:

- Robust age checks
- Safer algorithms

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- Effective moderation
- Strong governance and accountability
- More choice and support for children

## **Understand what the act covers**

Once the Ofcom consultations have taken place, the affected services will have to:

- Remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place
- Prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content (e.g. pornographic content, content that promotes, encourages or provides instructions for suicide, self-harm or eating disorders, content depicting or encouraging serious violence or bullying content)
- Enforce age limits and use age-checking measures
- Be more transparent about the potential risks and dangers associated with the platforms
- Give parents/carers and children clear and accessible ways to report any problems

There will be sanctions for services that don't follow the act.