

What do we mean by online safety?

E-safety is the safe and responsible use of technology - not just the internet but of mobile phones and other devices. It also includes our responsibilities to other users to ensure that we are not making them feel scared or unsafe or encouraging them to break the law in any way.

Risks

Technology is no longer a separate part of life. Our children and many young adults have grown up with the internet, Wi-Fi and the many devices it can be accessed from. 'Apps' are created for use before the ability to walk and 23% of children have a digital footprint before they are born. And while adults may often feel left behind in this 'technology revolution' it is firmly embedded into day to day life for the majority.

The internet and new technologies should be seen as a positive development, it gives us opportunities to communicate with people across the world in various ways, do our shopping and banking and research– the world is at our fingertips. However as with offline life there can be risks to those who use it.

People intent on harming children, young people and adults now have more ways of doing so. Contact and finding information that could help them to exploit or groom an individual is more accessible via the internet and various social networking sites. Websites promoting extreme behaviour can be accessed, as can websites that look reliable but are in fact incorrect and sometimes illegal. We can download material that may be inappropriate and upload images in seconds, without thinking about possible consequences. We can find ourselves victims of identity theft and other types of fraud.

It is easy to think that to take away access to the internet when something goes wrong would be the best solution, but to understand the risks and how to prevent them from happening is often more effective. The aim of this page is to direct individuals to key information to help them to keep themselves and those they care about safe online.

The Law

Things that are illegal offline are also illegal online: This can often be overlooked, or assumed that illegal online behaviour may not be identified or followed up. Various legislation is in place that can be used when an online crime has been committed. Crimes can range from harassment to fraud to grooming to sharing files illegally (including child abuse images) among others and the Police and other enforcement agencies WILL investigate and prosecute as appropriate should illegal online behaviour come to their attention