

A guide to Parental Controls

Produced by Knowsley CLCs

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Knowsley
City Learning Centres

Introduction and contents

Introduction

This guide will help you set up parental controls to provide your child with a safer online environment. Parental controls can help to protect your child from seeing something that they shouldn't - although it is important to emphasise that no system is effective all of the time so it is important to engage with your child and talk to them about their online life regularly.

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Operating systems

The Operating Service that you use on your laptop/computer will include parental controls for free. You will need to create an account to set up the parental controls.

Microsoft

Set up a free Microsoft account to access the 'family group' settings. This feature works on Windows 10, Xbox One devices, and Android devices running Microsoft Launcher. You'll have the ability to:

- Set screen time limits.
- Set age appropriate content filters and block inappropriate content.
- Set up 'find your family' so you can see where your family are.
- Set up activity reports which includes a weekly email report detailing their browsing history.
- Request adult approval when your child would like to buy something in the Microsoft store.

Find out more here: https://account.microsoft.com/family/

Mac OS

To use parental controls, add a a user account for your child and then turn on parental controls. Here are just a few of the features available to you :

- Disable the built-in camera.
- Restrict contact with other people through Mail.
- Specify which apps are allowed.
- Ability to limit access to websites.
- Disable or limit access to the iTunes Store.
- Set time limits for weekdays, weekends and bedtime.
- Prevent apps and services from accessing your child's data.

Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/mac-help/mtusr004/10.14/mac/10.14

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Home Internet

Most broadband providers include parental controls for free as part of their broadband package so any device that connects to your WiFI will will be protected by any controls you have set up. Remember, children may have devices that use 3G or 4G so they won't always be connected to your home internet so ensure you set up parental controls on their devices too.

Sky

Sky Broadband Shield is included within your Sky Broadband package and helps to protect against phishing and malware-infected sites. It also includes Safe Search which is designed to block explicit content when you search online. Your Sky Broadband Shield will automatically be set as suitable for teenagers during the day and adults in the evening. You can change this to suit your family:

1. **Choose a rating**: You can choose between PG, 13, 18 or customise your protection.
2. **Watershed:** This feature allows you to set age rating restrictions depending on the time of day.
3. **Block content:** You can block specific websites.

Find out more here: https://www.sky.com/help/diagnostics/sky-broadband-shield/sky-broadband-shield

Virgin Media

Web Safe is included within your Virgin Media broadband package to help protect any device that is connected to your WiFi. You are able to customise your settings, for example block access to known fraudulent websites or those that aren't suitable for children.

Virgin Media also offers an additional security tool called F-Secure SAFE which can be installed on up to five devices such as mobile phones, tablets, PCs and Macs. This offers anti-virus protection to these devices as well as parental controls both in and out of the home.

Find out more here: https://www.virginmedia.com/shop/broadband/parental-control.html

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BT

BT include parental controls within their broadband package. Once activated, all devices connected to your BT Home Hub will have content filtered to your set filter level. There are three predefined filter levels (strict, moderate and light) available or you can customise your protection. BT also offer the following functionality:

- Set 'Always allow' specific sites
- Set 'Always block' sites that you feel are inappropriate such as YouTube.
- Set up homework time
- Set a time for filters to be on/off

Find out more here: https://www.bt.com/help/security/parental-controls/how-to-keep-your-family-safe-online-with-bt-parental-controls-an#settingup

TalkTalk

HomeSafe is included within your TalkTalk Broadband package to allow you to filter your internet to keep your family safe. You can choose the type of websites to block automatically.

Find out more here: https://www.talktalk.co.uk/shop/security/homesafe

Vodafone

Vodafone Secure Net is included within your Vodafone Broadband package and helps to protect against harmful websites and viruses. You can also block inappropriate websites on your child's device and restrict mobile use to certain times of the day.

Find out more here: https://securenet.vodafone.co.uk/

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Consoles

All consoles offer additional parental controls to limit time spent on the device or limit who your child can communicate with online. Also, be aware of the PEGI ratings on a game which shows you the age suitability of the game e.g. a PEGI rating of 12 shows the game is only suitable for players over the age of 12 due to its content.

Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One

Xbox offers built in family settings to help you manage the following:

- Set screen time
- Filter content based on your child's age.
- Limit who your child can communicate with online.
- Approve your child's purchases.
- Set up "Ask a parent" for your child to add a friend.

Find out more here: https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming

Nintendo Switch

The Nintendo Switch Parental Controls smart device app is a free app that can be linked with Nintendo Switch to monitor what your child is playing. The app creates a report so you can see which video games your child plays and how long for. It also allows you to set which games your child can play based on their PEGI age rating and restrict your child from sending/receiving messages from other users.

Find out more here: https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Nintendo-Switch/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.html

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PS4

PS4 offers a variety of Parental Control/ Family Management options such as:

- A System Restriction Passcode - stops other users from logging into your account to make changes to your parental control settings.
- Restrict Age Level for Games (based on PEGI ratings)
- Restrict Blu-ray discs and DVD movies
- Restrict use of PlayStation® VR - this is not for use by children under 12 years.
- Disable the Internet Browser.
- Disable children from communicating via chat, messages, or displaying and entering comments for friend requests and game invitations.
- Hide games and game features based on your child's age.
- Set the monthly maximum amount of money a child can spend in the store.

Find out more here: https://support.playstation.com/s/article/PS4-Parental-Controls

PS5

As with PS4, PS5 includes parental controls and spending limits to help you manage your child's activity. You will need your own account for the PlayStation Network and an account for each child. There are preset parental controls in three categories - Child, Early teens or Late Teens.

You will be able to:

- Set age rating levels for games and apps.
- Restrict Blu-ray discs and DVD movies
- Restrict use of PlayStation VR.
- Restrict web browsing.
- Restrict communication.
- Set the monthly maximum amount of money a child can spend in the store.

Find out more here: https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/

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Social Media

Facebook (13+)

Included in Facebook's setting are the ability to set who can see your posts, who can contact you and the ability to review all posts before appearing on your timeline (Timeline Review).

Unfriend: go to their profile, click on Friends and select Unfriend.
Blocking: If you don't want somebody to add you as a friend or send you a message then block them. Select Settings & Privacy and then settings, click Blocking and enter the name of the person, click Block, select the correct person and click block and block.
Facebook Privacy Check up: this helpful tool helps you review your settings. Select Privacy Shortcuts and review.
Find out more here: https://en-gb.facebook.com/help/325807937506242

Instagram (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set as public. To change your profile to private (so only people you approve can follow you) go to your profile, tap Settings (from menu), tap Privacy and tap to toggle Private Account on.

Remove a follower: Go to your profile and tap followers and select remove to the right of the person.
Blocking: If you want to stop somebody from liking or commenting on your posts, you can block them. To do this, tap their username, tap on the 3 circles in the top right and select block.
Turn off commenting on a post:
Tap the 3 circles above your post and select Turn Off Commenting.

Find out more here: https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501

WhatsApp (16+)

By default, WhatsApp sets your privacy settings to allow any WhatsApp user to see your read receipts, last seen, about and profile photo.

To change any of these settings, go to settings, account and privacy.

Reporting: When you receive a message from an unknown number for the first time, you will be given the option to report the number. This report will then send the most recent messages in the chat to WhatsApp. You can also report any issues direct to WhatsApp within the app by going to settings, help and contact us.

Find out more here: https://faq.whatsapp.com/general/security-and-privacy/staying-safe-on-whatsapp/

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TikTok (13+)

You can choose to have a public or private account. If you set your account to private, then only those you accept as friends can see your videos. To do this go to your profile, tap the settings icon (three dots), tap Privacy and Safety and turn on Private account.

Report inappropriate content: you can report an account, video, comment and message. Follow the instructions here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/report-a-problem

Family Pairing

You can use Family Pairing to link your own TikTok account to your child's account. This will give you access to additional controls such as:

- **Screen Time Management:** Control how long your child can spend on TikTok.
- **Direct Messages:** Limit who can send messages to them or turn off direct messaging completely. *Direct messaging is automatically disabled for registered accounts between the ages of 13 and 15.*
- **Restricted Mode:** Restrict the appearance of inappropriate content.
- **Discover Search bar -** Option to disable.

Find out more here: https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/

Twitter (13+)

When you set up your Twitter account, you can choose whether you would like to keep your tweets public or protected (private). To keep them private, go to Settings, select privacy and safety and select protect your tweets,

Unfollow somebody: Click the the three dots next to their tweet and select unfollow.
Blocking: Click the three dots next to their tweet and select block.

Location: To keep your location private (so followers can't see the location you are tweeting from), go to Settings and Privacy, select privacy and safety and ensure precise location is disabled.

Find out more here: https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-privacy-settings

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Snapchat (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set so only friends you've added can contact you or view your story.

Unfriend: Go to the chat screen, tap and hold on a friend's name, tap 'more' and then tap 'Remove Friend'.
Block a friend: Go to the chat screen, tap and hold on a friend's name, tap 'more' and then tap 'Block'.

Location settings: This feature allows your friends to see where you are (including when you are at home) when you have the app open. **It is so important that you check your child's settings for this feature**. Your location won't be shared on the map until you open it for the first time, at which point you can choose:

- **Ghost Mode (Only Me):** your location won't be visible to anyone else.
- **My Friends:** your location will be shared with all of your friends
- **My Friends, Except ...:** your location will be shared with your friends, except the friends on this list.
- **Only These Friends ...:** choose specific friends to share your location with.

Who Can Contact Me: in your privacy settings you can choose who can contact you directly with Snaps, Chats, calls, etc.

Find out more here: https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2

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TV/Streaming

However your child chooses to watch TV, make sure you have set up appropriate parental controls.

Sky TV

You can set up a Parental Guidance PIN to restrict the programmes and channels that can be viewed. Family Setting removes adult channels and requires a PIN to be entered for purchases. You can also apply restrictions based on age certification or restrict access to specific channels.

Find out more here: https://www.sky.com/help/articles/set-up-parental-controls-on-your-tv

Younger children could use the Sky Kids app which only contains appropriate content. It allows you to create personalised profiles, manage screen time, set age filters and put the app to sleep.

BBC iPlayer

You can set up a Parental Guidance PIN to control what your children have access to when using the BBC iPlayer. Once it is turned on, to watch anything with a BBC Guidance label, the user will have to enter the PIN. You will have to turn this Parental Guidance Lock on separately on every device you have.

Find out more here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/help/questions/parental-controls

Younger children could use the BBC iPlayer Kids app which only contains content from CBeebies and CBBC.

Find out more here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/features/iplayer-kids

Apple TV

Apple TV offers a host of features to restrict usage, such as a PIN to restrict purchases or app usage, filter out explicit content when listening to music, block content based on film or age ratings and select yes or no to Multiplayer Games.

Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT200198#4th

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YouTube

YouTube offer a restricted mode which helps to restrict mature content being shown. Whilst YouTube state that this will never be 100% perfect, it does offer an extra layer of protection.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/174084

YouTube Kids is also available with the option to select the shows you prefer your child to watch.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/youtubekids/?hl=en-GB#topic=6130504

Netflix

You can add a PIN to your account so a 4-digit PIN must be entered to either play any TV show or movie above a selected maturity level (on all profiles) or to play a specific TV series or movie (on all profiles). Alternatively, you can create up to 5 personalised profiles in your Netflix account for each member of the household. You can then choose a maturity level for each profile to control the TV shows and movies they can view.

For younger children, you could create a kids profile which only includes content appropriate for children.

Find out more here: https://help.netflix.com/en/node/264

Amazon Prime

You can add a PIN to your account so a PIN must be entered to purchase or view restricted content (that you've enabled). You can restrict viewing of videos from certain ratings categories by selecting which ratings categories you'd like to restrict.

Find out more here: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201423060

Amazon Fire TV devices have their own parental controls settings, find out more here: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202104970

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Search Engines

An innocent search can result in inappropriate content being seen so we would recommend switching on parental controls. There are a few different search engines out there so find out which search engine your child uses and remember to set them up on all devices your child uses to access the internet, for example their tablet and phone.

Google

You can use Google SafeSearch to block explicit and inappropriate results such as pornography. As with all filtering systems, SafeSearch isn't 100% accurate. You will need to log into your Google account to lock any changes you make.

- Go to search settings at https://www.google.com/preferences.
- Under 'SafeSearch filters,' select the box to "Turn on SafeSearch."
- At the bottom of the page, select save.

Find out more here:https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/510

Yahoo

Yahoo offer a SafeSearch lock to protect children from certain types of content. To set this up:

- Sign in with your Yahoo ID.
- Go to Search preferences and select 'Strict–no adult content'.
- Select lock.
- Click Save and then sign out to prevent any further changes being made.

Find out more here: https://safety.yahoo.com/SafetyGuides/Search/index.htm

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Mobile devices

You can set up free parental controls and restrictions on most mobile devices which can limit what your child can access.

iOS

You can block or limit specific apps and features on your child's device. To do this:

- Go to Settings and then Screen Time. Tap Continue, then choose "This is My [Device]" or "This is My Child's [Device].” If you want to prevent another family member from changing your settings, tap Use Screen Time Passcode to create a passcode. If you're setting up Screen Time on your child's device, follow the prompts until you get to Parent Passcode and enter a passcode.
- Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions. If asked, enter your passcode, then turn on Content & Privacy.

You can also stop your child from installing or deleting apps and stop them from making in-app purchases. Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304. Apple have also created this support page for parents: https://support.apple.com/apple-for-kids

Android

When you turn on parental controls, you can restrict what content can be downloaded or purchased from Google Play based on maturity level and request that authentication is required before any purchases are confirmed, this includes in-app purchases.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738?hl=en-GB

You can also set up Family Link which lets you set digital ground rules as well as see where they are, set screen time limits and lock their device. You will need to download Family Link onto your own device first and then link your child’s account to it.

Find out more here: https://families.google.com/familylink/

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Smart Devices

Do you have a voice activated home assistant? Set up appropriate restrictions to limit what your child can do on them.

Amazon Echo/Dot (Alexa)

Whilst there are no specific parental controls, you can apply settings to restrict:

- In-app purchasing
- Accessing inappropriate content

These features can be set up through the Alexa app.

Google Home

By setting up a supervised account, children won't be able to do the following on Google Home:

- Play YouTube videos or songs from YouTube music (under 13)
- Make purchases
- Use non-Google apps (unless they have the 'Apps for families on Google Assistant' badge)

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/families/answer/7521263?hl=en

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Further Advice

There are many organisations set up to provide you or your child with advice should you need it. Here are just some of the organisations that can help you.

Helplines

ChildLine
0800 1111

Tel: 0808 800 5000

SAMARITANS

Tel: 116 123

NSPCC

Tel: 0808 800 2222

BullyingUK
Part of family lives

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Where to report

REPORT HARMFUL CONTENT.ONLINE

Reporting centre designed to assist everyone in reporting harmful content online.

Find out more here: https://reportharmfulcontent.com/

IWF Internet Watch Foundation

You can report sexual images of under 18s online directly to the Internet Watch Foundation.

Find out more here: https://www.iwf.org.uk/

CEOP A National Crime Agency command

If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with your child online.

Find out more here: https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Useful Websites

- **BBC Ownit:** https://www.bbc.com/ownit
- **CEOP:** https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- **ChildLine:** https://www.childline.org.uk/
- **Childnet:** https://www.childnet.com/
- **Internet Matters:** https://www.internetmatters.org
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** https://www.iwf.org.uk/
- **NSPCC/O2 Online Safety:** https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- **Thinkuknow:** https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
- **Vodafone Digital Parenting:** https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting

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