




February 2026

Keeping Your Child Safe Online - A Parent's Guide (2026)

In today's digital world, technology moves fast and even more so with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). We've compiled this quick-access guide to help you set boundaries, use the latest tools and have open conversations with your child.


Safer Internet Day 2026: "Smart Tech, Safe Choices"

This year's theme focuses on the safe and responsible use of AI. As AI becomes part of everyday homework, games and apps, it's vital to help children navigate it critically.

- **Official UK Resources:** Find age-specific activities and "Top Tips" for parents.
 -  saferinternet.org.uk

AI Safety: Safeguarding Your Child

AI can be a great tool for creativity but it requires a "safeguarding first" approach.

- **Check the Source:** Remind children that AI-generated information can be biased or incorrect. Always double-check facts with trusted sites.
 - **"Not Everything is Real":** Explain that AI can create very realistic but fake images and videos (Deepfakes).
 - **Privacy Matters:** Advise children never to share personal information, secrets or photos with AI chatbots.
 - **NSPCC AI Guide:** A simple 6-step guide for parents on AI risks and benefits.
 -  [NSPCC: AI Safety Tips](#)
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Setting Up "Parental Control Layers"

Experts recommend "layering" your safety settings: across your home Wi-Fi, the device itself and the individual apps.




1. The Device (Screen Time & Content)

- **Apple (iPhone/iPad):** Use 'Screen Time' in Settings to block apps and set time limits.
 -  [Apple Support Guide](#)
- **Android (Google Family Link):** A free app to manage your child's device remotely.
 -  [Google Family Link](#)

2. Gaming Consoles

- **PlayStation:** Manage spending limits and age ratings.
 -  [PS5 Parental Controls](#)
- **Xbox:** Set screen time and communication filters via the Family Settings app.
 -  [Xbox Family Hub](#)
- **Nintendo Switch:** Use the dedicated Parental Controls app.
 -  [Nintendo Switch Guide](#)

Essential UK Safety Hubs

- **Internet Matters:** The best UK site for tailored advice by age group (0-14+).
 -  [internetmatters.org](#)
- **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC):** Practical tips for securing passwords and social media accounts.
 -  [NCSC Family Guide](#)
- **CEOP (ThinkUKnow):** The go-to place for reporting concerns or learning about online grooming.
 -  [thinkuknow.co.uk](#)

When to Get Help

If your child sees something that worries them:

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1. **Stay Calm:** Encourage them to come to you without fear of losing their device.
2. **Report It:** Use the reporting tools within the app (TikTok, Instagram, etc.) or use **Report Remove** if a harmful image is involved.
3. **Childline:** They can call 0800 1111 for free, confidential support.