KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

A quick guide for parents & carers -September 2026

Talk • Check • Set boundaries • Stay curious • Ask for help

✓ 5 things you can do today

✓ Have regular, calm conversations about what your child enjoys online and who they talk to.

✓ Check privacy and safety settings together. Review them again after app updates or a new device.

✓ Agree simple family rules for screen time, downloads, in-app purchases and where devices are used.

✓ Encourage your child to pause and tell a trusted adult if anything feels worrying, confusing or uncomfortable.

✓ Make sure they know how to block and report users or content. Reassure them they will not be in trouble for asking for help.

⚠ Apps: stay informed, not alarmed

Children may use social and messaging apps to keep in touch, create and play. Risks can occur on any platform, so supervision, settings and open conversation matter.

Recent Childline data: between April 2025 and March 2026, the five platforms most often mentioned in counselling sessions where online sexual abuse was discussed were Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, Discord and WhatsApp.

Remember: this does not mean every child using these apps will experience harm. Use the information as a prompt to check in and review safety settings.

? If something worries your child

- Stay calm and listen.
- Thank them for telling you.
- Do not blame them or immediately remove access as a punishment.
- Save relevant information if safe to do so, use the platform's report/block tools, and seek trusted advice.

Quick safety check

- ☐ Is the account private where appropriate?
- ☐ Who can contact, message or add your child?
- ☐ Is location sharing switched off unless genuinely needed?
- ☐ Does your child know never to share passwords or personal information?
- ☐ Do they know they can come to you or another trusted adult?

TRUSTED HELP & PRACTICAL GUIDES

Internet Matters

Step-by-step social media privacy and parental-control guides.

Open guide →

UK Safer Internet Centre

Advice for parents and carers, reporting guidance and resources.

Open guide →

LEGO® Digital Child Safety

Friendly activities and guides for conversations about digital habits.

Open guide →

NSPCC / Childline data

Read the source behind the recent app figures and online-safety campaign.

Open guide →