

## **Parents Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Here's what you should know about six common activities children do online.**

As the first generation of Internet parents, we're at the bottom of a learning curve that seems to grow steeper with each new application and digital device. We can help our children take advantage of the best the Internet has to offer by showing them how to make smart decisions both online and off. The best way is to step into our children's online world.

***Here are six key ways children use the Internet and what you should know about each one.***

### **1. Learning Online**

The Internet is often the first (and only) stop for students who have a project to research or a question they want answered.

**Advice for you: Use [child-safe search engines](#), focus on results from trusted resources, such as the websites of established organisations and well-known newspapers and magazines.**



### **2. Visiting Virtual Worlds**

Children of all ages are drawn to virtual worlds where they can customize and control their own characters (called "avatars"), play games, interact with other players.

**Advice for you: Ask your child for a tour of her favourite virtual worlds. Check out the privacy features and parental controls.**

### 3. Social Networking

Social networking sites are the online equivalent of hanging out with friends. They allow users to stay in touch through instant messaging, posting public messages to one another's profiles, sharing photos and videos, playing online games, sending virtual gifts, and much more. Privacy settings allow users to restrict who can view their profiles.



**Advice for you: join Facebook or similar and go through the privacy controls with your child, get them to guide you through it. Make friends with them online, then you can keep an eye on them. Also a good rule of thumb is that only people your child has met in person should have access to their social networking profile.... please remember:**

Children under 13 years old are not permitted access to Facebook and similar Social Networking sites; Facebook requires its users to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. Providing false information to create an account is a violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.. In addition, parents of children aged 13 and older should consider whether their child should be supervised while using Facebook/similar social networking sites.

### 4. Staying in Touch With Friends

Once children reach their pre-teen and teenage years, texting and instant messaging and sending pictures/videos through computers, mobile phones, and other mobile devices.

**Advice for you: Ask your child to think about whether he would like any of the texts or pictures he meant for only one friend to appear on the mobile phones and computer screens of all his classmates.....**

### 5. Posting and Viewing Videos

Video-sharing sites are incredibly popular with children. The video-sharing site YouTube has a policy against sexually explicit content and hate speech, but it relies on users to flag content as objectionable. Sit down with your child when she/he logs onto video-sharing sites so you can guide her choices. Tell him/her that if you're not with him/her and he/she

sees something upsetting, she should get you. It's important that you know what he/she sees so you can figure out together what to do about it.

## 6. Playing Games

Games such as Xbox Live, allow players to interact online through text messaging or voice chat using a headset. If your child plays online games, set a rule that he play only with people he knows in person.

As your child grows and digital technology evolves, keep the lines of communication open. Show that you're interested in his online life. *But don't worry if you're always a few steps behind.* Because as a parent your job isn't to hold your child's hand every step of the way. It's to prepare her to one day go out into the world without you. **Both online and off.**

As parents we want to let our children explore and experience the world around them, at the same time we want to protect them.

In the digital world, the majority of parents feel unable to help, support and protect their child as they don't feel equipped and knowledgeable about ICT and the Internet...because of this and the many horrific stories we have heard around Internet safety, grooming and paedophilia or the new term is Technophilia (Paedophiles using technology to 'groom' their potential victims).

Because of this lack of knowledge we can go either of two ways and both can be quiet damaging:

'Wrap the child in cotton wool' ban laptops/computers/mobile phones etc. or make sure they are very restricted.

Or the 'well they know what they're doing' approach.

The second is odd, ask yourself this question:

When you were teaching you're child to cross the road did you say 'well they know what a car is....they know what a road is...open the door, off you go and give it a try...'

So why would you say 'well, they know what a computer is...they know what a keyboard is....so off you go and give it a try'