# Keeping your children safe online

**The summer holidays are here! Free from school for weeks, your children will be outdoors every day, playing in the garden, meeting friends and making the most of the long, and we hope sunny, days.**

Okay, perhaps all that outdoor activity is a parent's vision which isn't quite matched by reality. Smartphones, games consoles, tablets and desktop computers are probably going to feature quite heavily in your children's holiday fun. Years ago, children roamed the countryside in their summer holidays—now they're just as likely to be roaming the internet.

**To help you worry less about your children's safety while they're online, we've put together these tips for you...**

1. Talk to your children about the websites they like and visit. Ask questions about how they spend their time online and make it a conversation, not an interrogation. Talk about their online friends, to get a feel for who they are in contact with. Don't allow their online time to become a world you know nothing about.

2. Have them use devices in places where you can see what they're doing. Make being online part of a wider social experience, rather than an activity conducted behind closed doors.

3. Don't be afraid to set boundaries. Talk about the rules you want them to observe and get their agreement. You may want to set limits on the time they spend online or the websites they use. Make them aware of the age limits on certain sites, such as not being permitted a Facebook account if you're under 13.

4. Discuss the dangers, in an age-appropriate way, and encourage them to let you know when they encounter something unexpected or that they don't like. Many children don't know anything about phishing, viruses and social media etiquette and while you're probably not an expert on them either, it's worth being aware of the danger signals.

5. Establish fast routes to help. Whether it's a route for your children to take when they have a problem, or for you when the issues exceed your experience, a quick way to support helps provide peace of mind. It may be you have a knowledgeable friend to turn to, helpful and trusted online friends, or a respected website where you can go for advice.

6. Teach your children about passwords, privacy and permanence. Show them how to create strong, memorable passwords using sentences and digits, work through the privacy controls on their social networks with them, and impress on them that almost anything shared online becomes permanent.

7. Be prepared to learn. It's easy to joke that our children know more about the online world than we do, and they certainly perceive it differently because they're growing up with it. Don't be afraid to learn about the devices, websites and social networks that they use, so that you're better informed.

8. Use antivirus and parental controls where appropriate. But don't assume these will offer a lot of protection. They are just part of your bigger online safety toolkit.

The summer holidays are a time for freedom and fun, not anxiety about what could happen to your children online. By being proactive about internet safety, talking to your children and being aware of what they are up to, you're making it much easier for them, and you, to stay safe.

## Keeping your business safe online

We work with our clients to identify their online security needs and develop solutions for protecting their data and their hardware. Through our proactive service methodology, we take actions in advance to keep our clients' systems safe, avoiding disruption to their day-to-day activities.

**If you want to know more about how our IT security solution can benefit your organisation today, give us a call on 0808 168 9135 or email enquiries@itsupport365.co.uk. We'd be pleased to have a no-obligation conversation with you.**

Our clients want to give all their attention to running their business without unnecessary worries about online security. Through a mix of training, hardware and software, we minimise the risks from viruses, cybercrime and other threats.