

# Online Ages

**Every family will have their own approach to staying safe online, but try to talk regularly with your kids about what they've been doing online. Encourage them to come to you immediately with anything that makes them feel uncomfortable and know how to block content or report things on websites. As a parent the most important thing is to set a good example and show your children what safe sharing looks like.**

**Age 4 and under** - The internet can be a fantastic learning resource, with games and apps to help develop your child's memory and speech, as well as explore their creativity and keep them entertained. Online time should be family time though. Always accompany your child online and protect your devices with passwords so that they can't access them accidentally.

**Age 5-7** - 'Proper' social networks will still be off limits, but social games such as Disney's Club Penguin are a great way for your kids to dip a toe in the water, with parental supervision. Just keep an eye on in-app purchases, set clear boundaries for use and start talking about staying safe and what to do if they have a concern.

**Age 8-11** - Social networks will start to come onto the radar but try to resist for now. Facebook doesn't allow users younger than 13 to join. You may also be thinking about your child's first phone or tablet. Research the device and look at the security on it so parental controls can be put in place as well as passwords.

**Age 12-15** - Children are legally allowed to use most social networks at 13. Discuss what's safe to share and help set up their account by holding passwords and talking about parental controls. Follow or friend them on the applications, however they will also want some independence, so talk regularly about what they're doing online and who they're chatting to so they know they can come to you if something goes wrong.

**Age 16+** - Your teenager will no doubt be a social networking pro by now and may well be experimenting with internet dating and meeting new people online, respect their space, as you would in real life, however, keep chatting openly to them about their social networking, keeping safe, sharing information safely, and within the law, this way you can check they're sharing information wisely