

## Keeping your child SAFE online - A parent's/guardian's guide

Nord Anglia eLearning's products and services are aimed at helping 11-19-year-olds to extend the scope of their educational experience by offering them the opportunity to learn and work online. Many of these students will already be very 'Web-wise', but here's a brief guide for parents/guardians who may be looking for some help in making sure their child is safe when using the internet:

- **Get involved.** Talk to your child about their Internet use and take an interest. Your involvement is the best way of keeping them safe.
- **Be positive!** The Internet is a fantastic resource for learning, entertainment and communication. Just like in the real world, you need to take a few **sensible precautions.**
- **Let them come to you.** If something they don't like happens online, let your child know that they can come to you; be their first point of call.
- **Try not to overreact.** This could simply make your child secretive about their Internet use and close down lines of communication between you.
- **Set some ground rules.** If you decide to use software to filter or monitor information on the Internet, talk this over with your child. Any ground rules you agree will be much more effective.
- **Beware of strangers.** Explain to your child that they should **never go alone** to meet anyone they have only met over the Internet. This includes **anyone** (eg other students and teachers) they have met in the Virtual-Workspace chatrooms and community discussion forums. As heavily monitored as these two areas are, your child can never be too sure about who they are really talking to; someone could easily pretend to be someone they're not, which is very difficult for the Virtual-Workspace Team to detect.
- **Never give out personal details.** Explain to your child that they should never give out their personal contact details to people they meet online. Again, this includes **anyone** they talk to in the Virtual-Workspace chatrooms and community discussion forums. Remember that, although these two areas are heavily monitored, your child can never be too sure about who they are really talking to. As above, someone could easily pretend to be someone they're not, which is very difficult for the Virtual-Workspace Team to detect.
- **REMEMBER:** All the safety advice here also applies to **going online using a mobile phone.**

We offer the following safety tips, issued by [www.parentsonline.gov.uk](http://www.parentsonline.gov.uk), as a suitable set of *general* guidelines for safe use of the Internet for your family...

### Top 10 Safety Tips

1. Consider using Internet Filtering software, Walled Gardens and Child Friendly Search Engines. Use your Browser's controls as some offer differing degrees of security for each family member.
2. Check out what child protection services your ISP offers, do they filter for SPAM, for instance? If not, ask them why.

3. Keep the computer in a communal area of the house, where it's easier to monitor what your children are viewing.
4. Tell children not to give out their personal details. If they want to subscribe to any services online, make up a family email address to receive the mail.
5. Kids love to chat, but make sure they only use moderated chatrooms and encourage them to introduce you to their online friends.
6. Encourage your children to tell you if they feel uncomfortable, upset or threatened by anything they see online.
7. Involve your children in writing your own Family Code of acceptable Internet Use. Remember that, what's acceptable for a teenager isn't necessarily OK for a primary school aged child so get their input.
8. Computer kit is expensive so bear in mind that a child with a laptop may be vulnerable when carrying it to and from school.
9. The Web's a great resource for homework, but remember to use more than one site in research to get broad and balanced information, and ALWAYS reference your research sources.
10. SURF TOGETHER! Go online with your children and become part of their online life. The key to safe surfing is communication.

### **Acknowledgements and further references**

**Nord Anglia eLearning** acknowledges that these guidelines are adapted from two important Government sources of advice and guidance on the safe use of the World Wide Web.

For more information, please visit these websites:

#### **Home Office**

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/index.htm>

Access useful hints and tips on Internet use for parents/guardians.

#### **Department for Education and Skills (DfES)**

[www.parentsonline.gov.uk](http://www.parentsonline.gov.uk)

Read through a helpful range of general information for parents/guardians.