

## Dear Parent/Carer

### Digital Parenting checklists

The technology timeline for children and young people is far from straightforward. Not every child who uses the same technology – it depends on things like how mature they are, what your views are and what devices they have access to at home and at their friends' houses.

With this in mind, please read a copy of this *Digital Parenting* which has specific advice by age.

I have also pulled together some key action points to help your child(ren) enjoy their digital world and stay safer at various ages.

I have started with an 'essentials' checklist for parents/carers of children of any age, which highlights the actions you should take for your whole family. Then suggestions for parents/carers with children of different ages.

These are by no means definitive lists ; the tech world moves far too quickly to become assertive to, but they're a good starting point. Hope you find them useful.

### 'Essentials' checklist

- **Think** about how you guide your family in the real world and do the same in the digital world – don't be afraid to set boundaries and rules for your child from a young age
- **Have** a go at some of the technologies your son or daughter enjoys – play on the Wii together or ask them to help set you up on Facebook if you're not already a member
- **Talk to** your friends, family and other parents about how they help their children to manage their digital world – you might pick up some interesting tips
- **Make** the most of tools like [Parental Controls](#) (see below Blackberry and Guardian websites) on computers, mobiles and games consoles, privacy features on social networking sites, and safety options on [Google](#) and other search engines

- **Try** not to use technology as a babysitter too often – we all do it sometimes but it's important to know what your child is doing
  - **Make** digital issues part of everyday conversation – show your child that you understand how important technology is to them and talk about all its amazing benefits, but don't shy away from difficult subjects like responsible online behaviour, bullying and pornography.
- 
- **Create** a user account for your child on the family computer with appropriate settings and make the most of **Parental Controls** and tools like **Google Safe Search**
  - **Agree** a list of websites they're allowed to visit and the kind of personal information they shouldn't reveal about themselves online (like the name of their school or their home address)
  - **Decide** time limits for things like using the internet and playing on games consoles
  - **Bear** in mind what older siblings might be showing them on the internet, mobiles, games consoles and other devices and agree some rules as a whole family
  - **Talk** to other parents about their views on things like what age to buy kids a mobile and don't be pressured by your child into letting them use certain technologies if you don't think they're old enough or mature enough... no matter how much they pester you
  - **Familiarise** yourself with age ratings and descriptions on games, online TV, films and apps, so that you can be sure your child is only accessing age-appropriate content.
- 
- **Make** sure you've set some tech boundaries before they get their first mobile or games console – once they have it in their hands, it can be more difficult to change the way they use it
  - **Remind** your child to keep phones and other devices well hidden when they're out and about to minimise the risk of theft

- **Talk** to them about what they post and share online – written comments, photos and videos all form part of their ‘digital footprint’ and could be seen by anyone and available on the Web forever
- **Discuss** the kind of things they see online – this is the age when they might be looking for information about their changing bodies and exploring relationships, for example
- **Hold** the line on letting your son or daughter sign up for services like Facebook and YouTube that have a minimum age limit – talk to other parents and their school to make sure everyone is on the same page
- **Remind** them that they shouldn’t do anything online that they wouldn’t do face-to-face
- **Don’t** think it’s too late to reinforce boundaries or teach your child anything about technology – they might think they have the know-how but they still need your wisdom and guidance
- **Talk** to them about how they might be exploring issues related to their health, wellbeing and body image online – they might come across inaccurate or dangerous information on the Web at a vulnerable time
- **Discuss** how they behave towards others and what they post online and don’t shy away from difficult conversations about things like pornography and other risky behaviours, such as sexting
- **Give** control of their own budget for things like apps and music but make sure you have agreed boundaries so that they manage their money responsibly
- **Discuss** things like downloading and plagiarism so that they understand what’s legal and what’s not
- **Adjust** the settings on **Parental Controls** in line with their age and maturity – if they ask you to turn them off completely, think carefully before you do and agree in advance what is acceptable online behaviour.



[Facebook privacy controls](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/set_up_facebook_privacy_controls.html)

[http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/set\\_up\\_facebook\\_privacy\\_controls.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/set_up_facebook_privacy_controls.html)



[Vodafone Guardian](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/vodafone_guardian_app.html)

[http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/vodafone\\_guardian\\_app.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/vodafone_guardian_app.html)



[BlackBerry® Parental Controls](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/blackberry_parental_controls.html)

[http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/blackberry\\_parental\\_controls.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/blackberry_parental_controls.html)



[Xbox 360 Parental Control](#)

[http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/parental\\_controls\\_on\\_the\\_xbox360.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/parental_controls_on_the_xbox360.html)