

Useful Websites for the 'New Normal' Online

Measures to manage being stuck at home for extensive periods have put us and our children in front of screens for longer and more often than ever before. According to a recent survey¹, time online reached record levels during the 2020 lock down.

Here are some of our favourite websites for information about staying safe online when we are forced to spend long periods of time at home.

¹'Online Nation' Report 2020, Ofcom (24 June 2020)



Government advice

In 2020 the government published comprehensive information about staying safe online during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>

A safer online space

The best thing you can do to keep your children safe online is to talk to them about what they do online. This will help you understand what they like to do online and why, as well as how much they know about staying safe, so you can help them to build digital resilience:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/digital-resilience-toolkit/>

A family agreement can be a useful way of making the boundaries clear for everyone in the family and show your children that everyone needs to take responsibility for their safety online:

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement>

For younger children, make sure you have appropriate settings in place. As they get older, help them to manage the settings on their own devices:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/setup-safe/>

Not all screen time is created equal

When stuck at home for extended periods of time, instead of worrying about how much time children spend looking at screens, it may be more helpful to think about what they are doing while they are on their devices. Are they doing something creative, socialising or even exercising?

Consider how you can add value to their screen time. For example, if your child spends time gaming on their own, ask if you can join in or set up weekly family gaming nights. Gaming together makes their online experience more social and can help develop communication skills. It's also a great way to start a conversation with your kids about what they like to do online:

<https://www.askaboutgames.com/top-family-video-games-2020/>





Should my child be watching/playing that?

There are some great websites that offer information that can help you decide if a video game, film or app is suitable for your child:

Video games: <https://pegi.info/>

Films & TV: https://www.imdb.com/?ref=mv_home

Apps & video games, including some great advice on TikTok: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/#>

Commonsensemedia.org is a popular website for finding out about apps, films & TV, books and video games among parents and carers. Bear in mind that the information is US-based so you may want to check UK sources for information such as age-ratings: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Home learning

Want to include some online safety activities in your child's learning at home? The Thinkuknow website has some great worksheets for a range of ages on a variety of topics:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>

What to do when it goes wrong

How to report:

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/how-to-make-a-report>



These apps are all **free** to download

