

One Page stand out guidance for families on digital devices

There is masses of advice, quite besides our e-safety policy, safeguarding addendum, links to Karl Hopwood training and Parentzone. These pithy ten points came from the New York Times not long ago and is a mercifully brief and clear outline for parents which does help focus on the key factors.

1. **Digital devices deserve a special kind of respect** – children should ask before going online.
2. **Consider setting up an agreement or rules** on when and where your children have access to devices or specific apps. For example, caution with using devices alone (reading on tablets) but other more social activities in a shared space.
3. **Stick with a timetable** or schedule, so expectations are clear.
4. **Aim for an online time when you are least distracted** – so you can oversee most.
5. **Take the trouble to explain age-appropriate material** and how apps are targeted at different groups.
6. **Be sure to talk to about privacy** — or lack thereof — such as screen shots, recording and the digital footprint. Ensure passwords don't include their full names and other personal details are not given out.
7. **Explain the limitations** of online communication – can be much more open to misinterpretation.
8. **Explain the law**: sending or even just receiving an image of an undressed child breaks child pornography laws.
9. **Take some time to think about what you're comfortable with** — and not comfortable — what your children are doing online. Do you want them engaging with strangers? There are email apps that require parent approval of any emails that come from, or are sent to, people who aren't on a preapproved contact list. If your child plays online games, make sure you've both read their rules and community standards.
10. **It might be time to talk about pornography.** “Conversations about pornography can and should start really early,” said Emily Rothman, Ph.D., a community health scientist at the Boston University School of Public Health. And by “really early,” she means kindergarten.

You could explain to your kids that, just as adults drink coffee or alcohol but kids aren't supposed to, adults sometimes like to look at pictures or videos of naked people, but that this kind of content isn't good for kids' brains, and seeing it could be confusing or even scary. Say, “You should tell me if you ever see that stuff, not because I'd be cross or you've done anything wrong, but just because I want to know how to make your computer safer so that that doesn't happen again,” Dr. Rothman said. To minimize the chance that your child will accidentally stumble across pornography (it's easier than you think!), activate parental controls on your devices.