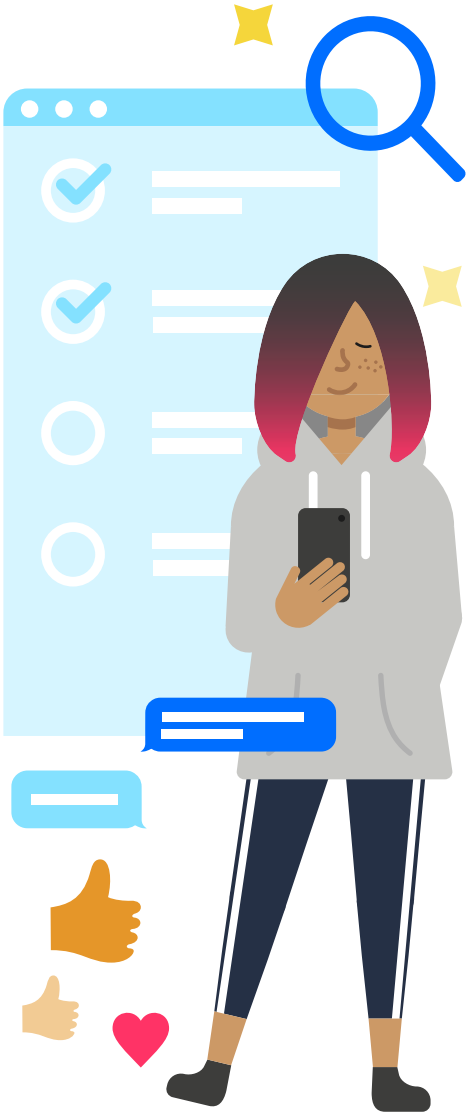
Online safety tips for parents of teenagers

14+ Year Olds

internet matters.org

99% of 12-17-year-olds have their own mobile phone
98% use video-sharing platforms
92% have their own social media profiles
75% play games online

*Source: Ofcom Children and parents: media use and attitudes 2022 report



Checklist:

Keep talking

Stay interested in what they're doing online and discuss what they might have come across. **Don't be afraid to tackle difficult subjects like cyberbullying, and sexting and pornography.** Help them to be critical of things they see online and judge the quality and reliability of online sources. Acknowledge that this is difficult considering how content can be manipulated online to persuade even the most savvy people. Talk together about how to manage some of these challenges and why it is important.

Manage their online reputation

Let them know that anything they upload, email or message could stay online forever. **Remind them that they should only post things online that they wouldn't mind you, their teacher or a future employer seeing.** There are lots of stories in the media that highlight the importance of online reputation and clearly demonstrate how things that happened years ago can resurface in the future. See our online reputation advice hub to get tips to support young people on this issue

Adjust controls

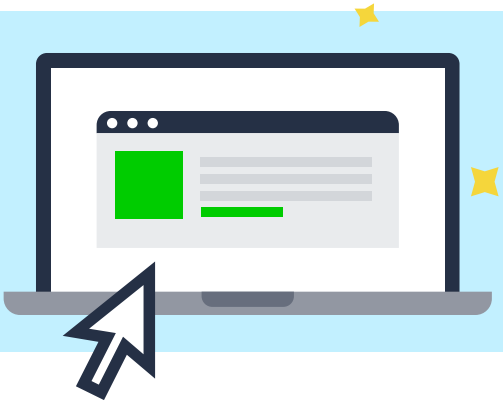
Adjust the parental controls on your broadband and internet-enabled devices, depending on your child's age. Your broadband provider can tell you how. Find out how to set up safe search in Google by going to the Google Safety Centre. Remember that at this age they are likely to have friends with unfiltered devices and whilst parental controls and filtering is important this needs to be done alongside dialogue and discussion.

Privacy matters

Make sure they set high privacy settings on social networks. Encourage them to regularly change their passwords and never to share or put online any of their personal details like phone number, address or their school. Use our social media privacy how-to guides to support them.

Stay safe on the move

Make sure safety and privacy settings are activated on their mobile devices and they aren't sharing private information. Be aware that using public WiFi might not filter inappropriate content, so look for friendly WiFi symbols when you're out and about. **Also, encourage them to use the parental control tools on their device** just in case they do connect to an unfiltered WiFi - such as at a friend's house.



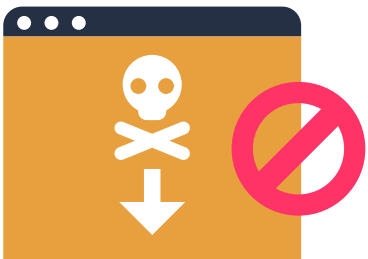
Know this stuff matters, but don't know where to turn?

Internet Matters is a free online resource for every parent in the UK. We'll show you the best ways to protect your children online – with information, advice and support on all the big online safety issues.

Learn about it:

Teach your child some simple rules

- Make sure your child knows how to **block abusive comments and report content** that worries them.
- Teach them to **respect others online and think about comments before they post them** and discuss how easily comments made online can be misinterpreted.
- Don't arrange to meet people in real life that they've only talked to online and **remind them that some people may not be who they say they are.**



- **Advise them to use secure and legal sites to download music and games** to avoid experiencing the risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites. Visit our 'Dangers of digital piracy' advice hub more advice.
- **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything.
- When using the internet for homework, **make sure they use information appropriately** and explain things in their own words rather than copying.

Talk about it:

Tips for a meaningful conversation

- Make sure your child knows **they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online** and make sure that you listen and don't overreact - the important thing is that they have come to you for help and support.
- **Tell them you trust them to do the right thing** rather than over monitoring their internet use.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, **stay calm and listen without judging them** and don't threaten to take away their devices.
- **Tackle peer pressure** by explaining that if they're talked into bullying someone online or sending inappropriate images it may get reported to their school or even the police. Learn how online actions can affect young people's reputation with our advice hub
- **Talk to them about how much time they spend online** and make sure this is balanced against other activities. See our 'Screen time guide for 14+' for age-specific advice.
- Discuss how they can **report any harmful or inappropriate content or behaviour** that they encounter online - empower them to take control themselves.

Deal with it

You can find out where to get help and advice on the Report issue page of internetmatters.org, where we include information on how to report problems - and which relevant organisations and agencies to turn to.

On this page, we also provide information on how to deal with any specific issues you may encounter with your child; such as cyberbullying, finding inappropriate content, privacy and identity theft, your child's online reputation, online pornography and child grooming.

Learn more about apps

It can be difficult to stay on top of what apps your child is using and who they are talking to online – find out more about the latest apps at internetmatters.org/apps.

Scan below or visit **internetmatters.org** for more advice

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