

There are many benefits to using computers at home and at work but it is very important that you and your family understand how to keep yourselves safe on line.

Are you aware of your digital footprint?

Anything that gets posted online or emailed leaves a digital trail, including pictures, comments and shared posts. Information that is considered private has the potential to be downloaded by other people and shared.

- Get to know the privacy settings on the social media you use and set accordingly.
- Think before you post / email. Would you want this information or this photo shared? What does this information say about you or your child? What might a future employer think?
- Think about using a nickname instead of your real name when using social media
- Speak with your child about what they share online.



Hidden costs: Some internet sites and apps have hidden costs. For example a free game could charge for additional lives or help completing the game.

- Ensure the settings on your device ask for authentication before purchasing.
- Get to know and use the parental control settings for app stores that you use and for your device.



Computer security: Online criminals try to attack your computer using viruses and spyware.

- Use antivirus and firewall software and keep this up to date.
- Be wary of emails from unknown sources; especially those with attachments.
- Back up your files such as music, pictures and documents on a regular basis.

The internet is a good tool for communicating with other people but this can create some risks such as:

Cyber bullying: This is where a group or individual people try to tease, threaten, embarrass or intimidate someone using the internet or a mobile phone.

- Talk to someone you trust about it.
- Don't reply to any messages you receive because this may encourage further contact
- Try changing your online user ID or nickname.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images you receive.
- Block people that deliberately send unpleasant messages.



Grooming: Both children and adults are at risk of being contacted by people who seek to abuse them, expose them to extremist views or other inappropriate materials.

- Be aware of what your child is doing online.
- Avoid sites which encourage extremist points of view or illegal activity.

Identity theft: Online criminals will try and trick people into giving them your information. This is known as phishing.



- Choose strong passwords.
- Secure websites should have a padlock symbol in the browser window and start with https://.
- Be wary of and block unwanted spam or phishing emails.
- Don't tell anyone your passwords.
- Use different passwords for different websites.