What to do if you're worried about your child online

There may be times when you're worried about your child's online safety. If you're unsure what to do, help is at hand.

We've put together some of the things that might be worrying you, and what you can do to help your child.

I'm worried my child is...

- Taking & Sharing Inappropriate Pictures
- Sharing Personal Information
- Being Bullied Online Or, Bullying Others Online
- Spending too much time online

If you wish to report a website that concerns you, contact the Internet Watch Foundation https://www.iwf.org.uk

If you are concerned about you or someone you know- tell someone what your concerns are - speak to a teacher, doctor, social worker, police officer.

Contact Numbers:
Duty Social Worker - (01595) 744421
Out of Hours Duty Social Worker - (01595) 695611
Lerwick Police Station - 101 (in an emergency call 999)
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration – 0131 244 3780
Childline – 0800 1111

For more information and on the work of the Shetland Child Protection Committee please follow the link below:-

http://www.safershetland.com/child-protection

Other Useful Links:
https://parentzone.org.uk/home
http://parentinfo.org
http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk
http://www.ceop.police.uk
http://www.childnet.com
http://www.childline.org.uk
https://www.net-aware.org.uk - (gives a description of most popular apps and what is good and bad about them)
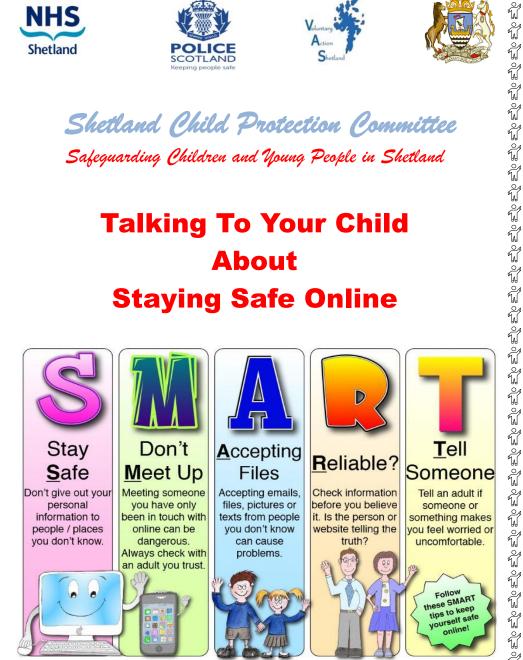
Shetland Child Protection Committee

Safeguarding Children and Young People in Shetland

Talking To Your Child About Staying Safe Online

S Stay Safe
Don't give out your personal information to people / places you don't know.

M Don't Meet Up
Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Always check with an adult you trust.

A Accepting Files
Accepting emails, files, pictures or texts from people you don't know can cause problems.

R Reliable?
Check information before you believe it. Is the person or website telling the truth?

T Tell Someone
Tell an adult if someone or something makes you feel worried or uncomfortable.

Follow these SMART tips to keep yourself safe online!

Talking to your child – openly and regularly – is the best way to help keep them safe online.

You might find it helpful to start with a family discussion to set boundaries and agree what's appropriate. Or you might need a more specific conversation about an app or website your child wants to use or something you're worried about.

If you're not sure where to start then here's the advice you need – great ways to begin conversations to keep your child safe online.

Explore sites and apps together

Talk about what might be OK for children of different ages. Ask your child what sites or apps they like. Write a list, and look at them together. The NSPCC net aware site lists all social networking sites and apps that are current and gives a description of what they are, what is good about them and what is bad about them. Please see the link here: https://www.net-aware.org.uk

Be positive about what you see, but also be open about concerns you have: "I think this site's really good" or "I'm a little worried about things I've seen here".

Talk to your child about what you think is appropriate – but also involve them in the conversation. Ask what they think is OK for children of different ages – they'll feel involved in the decision-making.

Be aware that your child might talk about friends who use apps or visit sites that you've decided aren't suitable. Be ready to discuss your reasons, but recognise that they may not agree with you. Listen carefully for the reasons why.

Go through a final list of sites you both agree are OK, and work out when you'll next discuss it.

Ask about things they might see online which make them feel uncomfortable

Talk about things they, or their friends, have seen that made them feel uncomfortable:

- *Be specific. What exactly made them feel uncomfortable and why? Is it people or animals being hurt? Nasty comments about others?*
- *Link these to things in the real world, and explain that you're always here to protect and help them online and off.*
- *Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.*
- *Show them how to report or block on the sites and apps they use. Use Net Aware to find out how.*
- *Tell them you'll help them to report anything upsetting they've seen, or to deal with online bullying.*

Talk about how they can stay safe on social networks

Ask your child if they know:

- *Where reporting functions are*
- *How to block someone*
- *How to keep information private*

Show them how to do these things. Use Net Aware to help you.
Talk about online privacy, and being Share Aware.

Explain that online behaviour – including sharing personal information – should mirror behaviour in person.

Explain that talking to strangers isn't always **'bad'**, but they should always be careful about what they share as sometimes people aren't who they say they are.

Reassure them that you won't overreact – you're just looking out for them

Explain that you understand the internet is a great place to be and that you're just looking out for them. Tell them they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them.

Reassure them that you're interested in all aspects of their life. Say that you'd like to talk about stuff they've seen online, sites and apps they visit, and that you'll share the things you've seen too. Recognise that they'll be using the internet to research homework, for example.

Be Share Aware: talk about what's OK, and not OK, to share online

Talk to your child about what 'personal information' is - such as email address, full name, phone number, address and school name - and why it's important.

Explain simple ways to protect privacy. For example, avoiding usernames like birthdates or locations that give away too much information.

Discuss images and photos, and what might be appropriate. Help your child understand how photographs can give people a sense of your personality, and that sharing the wrong kind of image can give the wrong impression.

Explain that it isn't easy to identify someone online. People aren't always who they say they are, so don't share personal information. If it's someone who genuinely knows your child, they shouldn't need to ask for personal information online.

Tell your child that if they're in any doubt they should talk to you first.