A guide to Parental Controls

Produced by Knowsley CLCs

www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk

Knowsley
City Learning Centres

Introduction and contents

Introduction

This guide will help you set up parental controls to provide your child with a safer online environment. Parental controls can help to protect your child from seeing something that they shouldn't - although it is important to emphasise that no system is effective all of the time so it is important to engage with your child and talk to them about their online life regularly.

Operating Systems	*Page 3*	Search Engines	*Page 12*
Home Internet	*Page 4*	Mobile Devices	*Page 13*
Consoles	*Page 6*	Smart Devices	*Page 14*
Social Media	*Page 8*	Further Advice	*Page 15*
TV/Streaming	*Page 10*		

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Operating systems

The Operating Service that you use on your laptop/computer will include parental controls for free. You will need to create an account to set up the parental controls.

Microsoft

Set up a free Microsoft account to access the 'family group' settings. This feature works on Windows 10, Xbox One devices, and Android devices running Microsoft Launcher. You'll have the ability to:

- Set screen time limits.
- Set content filters and block inappropriate content.
- Set up activity reports which includes a weekly email report detailing their browsing history, apps and games that they have used.
- Track spending so you receive an email when your child would like to buy a game or app in the Microsoft store.

Find out more here: https://account.microsoft.com/family/

Mac OS

To use parental controls, add a a user account for your child and then turn on parental controls. Here are just a few of the features available to you :

- Disable the built-in camera.
- Restrict contact with other people through Mail.
- Specify which apps are allowed.
- Ability to limit access to websites.
- Disable or limit access to the iTunes Store.
- Set time limits for weekdays, weekends and bedtime.
- Prevent apps and services from accessing your child's data.

Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/mac-help/set-up-parental-controls-mtusr004/10.14/mac/10.14

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Home Internet

Most broadband providers include parental controls for free as part of their broadband package so any device that connects to your WiFI will will be protected by any controls you have set. Remember, children may have devices that use 3G or 4G so they won't always be connected to your home internet so ensure you set up parental controls on their devices too.

Sky

Sky Broadband Shield is included within your Sky Broadband package and helps to protect against phishing and malware-infected sites. It also includes Safe Search which is designed to block explicit content when you search online. Your Sky Broadband Shield will automatically be set as suitable for teenagers during the day and adults in the evening. You can change this to suit your family:

1. **Choose a rating**: You can choose between PG, 13, 18 or customise your protection.
2. **Watershed:** This feature allows you to set age rating restrictions depending on the time of day.
3. **Block content:** You can block specific websites and explicit images from search engine using Safe Search.

Find out more here: https://www.sky.com/shop/broadband-talk/broadband-shield/

Virgin Media

Web Safe is included within your Virgin Media broadband package to help protect any device that is connected to your WiFi. You are able to customise your settings, for example block access to known fraudulent websites or those that aren't suitable for children.

Virgin Media also offers an additional security tool called F-Secure SAFE which can be installed on up to five devices such as mobile phones, tablets, PCs and Macs. This offers anti-virus protection to these devices as well as parental controls both in and out of the home.

Find out more here: https://www.virginmedia.com/shop/broadband/parental-control.html

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BT

BT include parental controls within their broadband package. Once activated, all devices connected to your BT Home Hub will have content filtered to your set filter level. There are three predefined filter levels (strict, moderate and light) available or you can customise your protection. BT also offer the following functionality:

- Set 'Always allow' specific sites
- Set 'Always block' sites that you feel are inappropriate
- Set up homework time
- Set a time for filters to be on/off

Find out more here: http://bt.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/46768#settingup

TalkTalk

HomeSafe is included within your TalkTalk Broadband package to allow you to filter your internet to keep your family safe. You can choose the kinds of websites to block automatically.

Find out more here: https://www.talktalk.co.uk/shop/security/homesafe

Vodafone

Vodafone Secure Net is included within your Vodafone Broadband package and helps to protect against harmful websites and viruses. You can also block inappropriate websites on your child's device and restrict mobile use to certain times of the day. You can choose from two restrictions levels or create a custom profile.

Find out more here: https://support.vodafone.co.uk/Vodafone-products-and-services/Broadband/Content-Controls/1011443472

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Consoles

All consoles offer additional parental controls to limit time spent on the device or limit who your child can communicate with online. Also, be aware of the PEGI ratings on a game which shows you the age suitability of the game e.g. a PEGI rating of 12 shows the game is only suitable to players over the age of 12 due to its content.

xBox 360

The Xbox 360 console lets you manage your child's access to games, movies and television. The parental controls can be used to control the console as well as access to Xbox Live. You will have control of:

- Which games can be played.
- Which films and TV shows can be watched.
- How long each family member can use the xBox 360 for.
- Whether or not a family member can access Xbox Live.

Find out more here: https://support.xbox.com/en-GB/xbox-360/security/xbox-live-parental-control

xBox One

Xbox One also offers settings that you can adjust as necessary. The parental controls can be set either at xbox.com or through the console. You can control:

- Set what people can see about a profile.
- Limit who your child can communicate with online.
- View gaming history.

Find out more here: https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/4482922/xbox-one-online-safety-and-privacy-settings-for-parents-and-kids

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Consoles

PS4

PS4 offers a variety of Parental Control/ Family Management options such as:

- A System Restriction Passcode - stops other users from logging into your account to make changes to your parental control settings.
- Restrict Age Level for Games (based on PEGI ratings)
- Restrict Blu-ray discs and DVD movies
- Restrict use of PlayStation® VR - this is not for use by children under 12 years.
- Disable the Internet Browser.
- Disable children from communicating via chat, messages, or displaying and entering comments for friend requests and game invitations.
- Hide games and game features based on your child's age.
- Set the monthly maximum amount of money a child can spend in the store.

Find out more here: https://support.playstation.com/s/article/PS4-Parental-Controls?language=en_US

Nintendo Switch

The Nintendo Switch Parental Controls smart device app is a free app that can be linked with Nintendo Switch to monitor what your child is playing. The app creates a report so you can see which video games your child plays how long for. It also allows you to set which games your child can play based on their PEGI age rating and restrict your child from sending/receiving messages from other users.

Find out more here: https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Nintendo-Switch/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.html

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Social Media

Facebook (13+)

Included in Facebook's setting are the ability to set who can see your posts, who can contact you and the ability to review all posts before appearing on your timeline (Timeline Review).

Unfriend: go to their profile, hover over Friends and select Unfriend.
Blocking: If you don't want somebody to add you as a friend or send you a message then block them. Select Settings, click Blocking and enter the name of the person, click Block, select the correct person and click block and block.
Facebook Privacy Check up: this helpful tool helps you review your settings. Select Settings, Privacy Shortcuts and Review a few important privacy settings.

Find out more here: https://en-gb.facebook.com/help/

Instagram (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set as public. To change your profile to private (so only people you approve can follow you) go to your profile, tap Settings, tap Account Privacy and tap to toggle Private Account on.

Remove a follower: Go to your profile and tap followers, tap to the right of the person and select remove.
Blocking: If you want to stop somebody from liking or commenting on your posts, you can block them. To do this, tap their username, tap on the 3 circles in the top right and select block.
Turn off commenting on a post: Tap above your post, select Turn Off Commenting.

Find out more here: https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501

WhatsApp (16+)

By default, WhatsApp sets your privacy settings to allow any WhatsApp user to see your read receipts, last seen, about and profile photo.

To change any of these settings, go to settings, account and privacy.

Reporting: When you receive a message from an unknown number for the first time, you will be given the option to report the number. This report will then send the most recent messages in the chat to WhatsApp. You can also report any issues direct to WhatsApp within the app by going to settings, help and contact us.

Find out more here: https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/general/

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Snapchat (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set so only friends you've added can contact you or view your story.

Unfriend: Go to a chat with that friend, tap the button at the top left and then tap Remove Friend.
Block a friend: Go to a chat with that friend, tap the button at the top left and then tap Block Friend.
Blocking: If you want to stop somebody from adding you as a friend or sending you a message then block them. Select settings, blocking and enter the name of the person, click block, select that person and click block and block.

Location settings: This feature allows your friends to see where you are (including when you are at home) when you have the app open. **It is so important that you check your child's settings for this feature**. Your location won't be shared on the map until you open it for the first time, at which point you can choose:

- **Ghost Mode (Only Me):** your location won't be visible to anyone else.
- **My Friends:** your location will be shared with all of your friends
- **My Friends, Except ...:** your location will be shared with your friends, except the friends on this list.
- **Only These Friends ...:** choose specific friends to share your location with.

Find out more here: https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2

Twitter (13+)

When you set up your Twitter account, you can choose whether you would like to keep your tweets public or protected (private). To keep them private, go to your Privacy and safety settings, select privacy and select protect my tweets,

Unfollow somebody: Click the arrow icon next to their tweet and select unfollow.
Blocking: Click the arrow icon next to their tweet and select block.

Location: To keep your location private (so followers can't see the location you are tweeting from), go to your Privacy and safety settings, select privacy and ensure precise location is disabled.

Find out more here: https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-privacy-settings

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TV/Streaming

However your child chooses to watch TV, make sure you have set up appropriate parental controls.

Sky TV

You can set up a Parental Guidance PIN to restrict the programmes and channels that can be viewed. Family Setting removes adult channels and requires a PIN to be entered for purchases. You can also apply restrictions based on age certification or restrict access to specific channels.

Find out more here: https://www.sky.com/help/articles/set-up-parental-controls-on-your-tv

Younger children could use the Sky Kids app which only contains appropriate content. It allows you to create personalised profiles, manage screen time, set age filters and put the app to sleep.

BBC iPlayer

You can set up a Parental Guidance PIN to control what your children have access to when using the BBC iPlayer. Once it is turned on, to watch anything with a BBC Guidance label, the user will have to enter the PIN. You will have to turn this Parental Guidance Lock separately on every device you have.

Find out more here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/help/how-to-guides/parental-guidance

Younger children could use the BBC iPlayer Kids app which only contains content from CBeebies and CBBC.

Find out more here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/help/how-to-guides/iplayer-kids

Apple TV

Apple TV offers a host of features to restrict usage, such as you can set up a PIN to restrict purchases or app usage, filter out explicit content when listening to music, block content based on film or age ratings.

Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT200198#4th

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YouTube

YouTube offer a restricted mode which restricts objectionable content being shown. Whilst YouTube state that this will never be 100% perfect, it does offer an extra layer of protection.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/174084

YouTube Kids is also available with the option to select the shows you prefer your child to watch.

Find out more here:https://support.google.com/youtubekids/?hl=en-GB#topic=6130504

Netflix

You can add a PIN to your account so a 4-digit PIN must be entered to either play any TV show or movie above a selected maturity level (on all profiles) or to play a specific TV series or movie (on all profiles). Alternatively, you can create up to 5 personalised profiles in your Netflix account for each member of the household. You can then choose a maturity level for each profile to control the TV shows and movies they can view.

For younger children, you could create a kids profile which only includes content appropriate for children.

Find out more here: https://help.netflix.com/en/node/264

Amazon Prime

You can add a PIN to your account so a PIN must be entered to purchase or view restricted content (that you've enabled). You can restrict viewing of videos from certain ratings categories by selecting which ratings categories you'd like to restrict.

Find out more here: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201423060

Amazon Fire TV devices have their own parental controls settings, find out more here: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202104970

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Search Engines

An innocent search can result in inappropriate content being seen so we would recommend switching on parental controls. There are a few different search engines out there so find out which search engine your child uses and remember to set them up on all devices your child uses to access the internet, for example their tablet and phone.

Google

You can use Google SafeSearch to block explicit and inappropriate results such as pornography. As with all filtering systems, SafeSearch isn't 100% accurate. You will need to log into your Google account to lock any changes you make.

- Go to search settings at https://www.google.com/preferences.
- Under 'SafeSearch filters,' select the box to "Turn on SafeSearch."
- At the bottom of the page, select save.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/510

Yahoo

Yahoo offer a SafeSearch lock to protect children from certain types of content. To set this up:

- Sign in with your Yahoo ID.
- Go to Search preferences and select 'Strict–no adult content'.
- Select lock.
- Click Save and then sign out to prevent any further changes being made.

Find out more here: https://safety.yahoo.com/SafetyGuides/Search/index.htm?guccounter=1&guce

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Mobile devices

You can set up free parental controls and restrictions on most mobile devices which can limit what your child can access.

iOS

You can block or limit specific apps and features on your child's device. To do this:

- Go to Settings and then Screen Time. Tap Continue, then choose "This is My [Device]" or "This is My Child's [Device]." If you want to prevent another family member from changing your settings, tap Use Screen Time Passcode to create a passcode. If you're setting up Screen Time on your child's device, follow the prompts until you get to Parent Passcode and enter a passcode.
- Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions. If asked, enter your passcode, then turn on Content & Privacy.

You can also stop your child from being installing or deleting apps and being unable to make in-app purchases. Find out more here: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304

Android

When you turn on parental controls, you can restrict what content can be downloaded or purchased from Google Play based on maturity level and request that authentication is required before any purchases are confirmed, this includes in-app purchases.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738?hl=en-GB

You can also set up Family Link which lets you set digital ground rules as well as see where they are, set screen time limits and lock their device. You will need to download Family Link onto your own device first and then link your child's account to it.

Find out more here: https://families.google.com/familylink/

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Smart Devices

Do you have a voice activated home assistant? Set up appropriate restrictions to limit what your child can do on them.

amazon alexa

Amazon Echo/Dot (Alexa)

Amazon Echo is controlled by the Amazon Household service which will allow you to apply restrictions to restrict:

- App access
- In-app purchasing
- Accessing inappropriate content

You will need to add a child to your Amazon household using your account details. One you have done this you can control what content your child can access by clicking on 'Manage Your Content and Devices.'

Find out more here: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html/ref=hp_200127470_?nodeId=201399130

Google Home

Google Home

By setting up a supervised account, children will not be able to do the following on Google Home:

- Play YouTube videos or songs from YouTube music
- Make purchases
- Use non-Google apps (unless they have the 'Apps for families on Google Assistant' badge)

To set it up, you will need to download the Google Home app on your child's phone and then set up the Google Home device (needs to be set up by someone 13 or older.

Find out more here: https://support.google.com/googlehome/answer/9039704?hl=en-gb&ref_topic=7196250

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Further Advice

There are many organisations set up to provide you or your child with advice should you need it. Here are just some of the organisations that can help you.

Helplines

ChildLine 0800 1111

SAMARITANS

Tel: 116 123

O2 NSPCC Let's keep kids safe online

Tel: 0808 800 502

BullyingUK Part of family lives

Tel: 0808 800 2222

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Where to report

Reporting centre designed to assist everyone in reporting harmful content online.

Find out more here: https://reportharmfulcontent.online/

You can report sexual images of under 18s online directly to the Internet Watch Foundation.

Find out more here: https://www.iwf.org.uk/

If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online.

Find out more here: https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Useful Websites

- **BBC Ownit:** https://www.bbc.com/ownit
- **CEOP:** https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- **ChildLine:** https://www.childline.org.uk/
- **Childnet:** https://www.childnet.com/
- **Internet Matters:** https://www.internetmatters.org
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** https://www.iwf.org.uk/
- **National Online Safety:** https://nationalonlinesafety.com/
- **NSPCC/O2 Online Safety:** https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- **Thinkuknow:** https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
- **Vodafone Digital Parenting:** http://vodafonedigitalparenting.co.uk/

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