

Online gaming, chat forums and messaging

Practical tips for parents and caregivers



01

Know what they're playing and using.

It can be beneficial for your children's development to begin allowing them independence online where appropriate and paired with open communication.

Find out which games, apps and chat forums they use, who they play or chat with, and what kind of content they might see. Familiarise yourself with the platforms, privacy settings and reporting tools.

02

Talk about appropriate online behaviour.

Have regular conversations about what being respectful online looks like, noticing red flags, and knowing when to talk to you if something feels wrong.

Remind them that not everyone online is who they say they are. Encourage them to be cautious about sharing personal details, accepting friend requests or chatting with people they don't know in real life. You may also want to discuss the dangers of AI.

03

Stay vigilant and aware of risks.

Look out for signs of online bullying, pressure to do things they're uncomfortable with, and changes in mood or behaviour. If something doesn't feel right, take it seriously and talk about it with them.

If your instincts are still telling you something is off, the last resort would be to limit or ban their use of the platform/s. While it's important to take your child's views into consideration, their safety is your top priority.

04

Encourage healthy boundaries.

Help them set boundaries around screen time, especially when it comes to gaming and social media. Encourage them to take breaks, get outside, and balance online and offline activities.

Show them how to report and block users on the platforms they use, and reiterate that you are always a safe place if they need help. Reassure them that open communication with you will not be punished or judged.



Before they log on,
check that:

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| ☐ They know what info is and isn't ok to share online | ☐ They are taking regular breaks and balancing their online time |
| ☐ You've talked about online friendships and stranger danger | ☐ They know to discuss anything that makes them uncomfortable or upset with you or a trusted support service such as Netsafe or Youthline |
| ☐ They know how to report and block someone | |