

Children, ICT & e-Safety

Information for parents and carers

The purpose of this guide

Children of today are increasingly using Information & Communication (ICT) in schools and in the home.

The guide explains:

- How your children are using ICT in school.
- How using ICT in the home can help children to learn.
- How children can use the Internet safely at home.
- Where to access further information.

How your child uses ICT at school

ICT in schools is taught as a subject in its own right and also supports children's learning in other subjects, including English and Maths. Within ICT lessons children learn to use a wide range of ICT including:

Word Processing to write stories, poems or letters

Databases to record information, e.g. minibeasts

Spreadsheets to create tables, charts and graphs

Desktop Publishing to design posters, leaflets or cards

Multimedia Presentation to present text, pictures, sound and video

Drawing Programs to create pictures and designs

Internet and CD-ROMs/DVDs to find information

Email to contact children and teachers in another school

Digital Cameras to record what they have done in class or on a visit

Electronic Sensors to record changes in light, sound and temperature

Controllable Robots to give instructions and make something happen

Website Publishing to present ideas and work over the internet.

How you can help your child at home

ICT is not just about using a computer. It also includes the use of controllable toys, digital cameras and everyday equipment such as a tape recorder or DVD player.

Children can be helped to develop their ICT skills at home by:

- Writing a letter to a relative
- Sending an e-mail to a friend
- Drawing a picture on screen
- Using the internet to research a class topic
- Planning a route with a controllable toy
- Using interactive games.

A selection of companies offer school software for use at home.

Benefits of using ICT at home

How we know that using ICT at home can help

Many studies have looked at the benefits of having access to a computer and/or the Internet at home. Here are some of the key findings:

- Used effectively, ICT can improve children's achievement
- Using ICT at home and at school develops skills for life
- Children with supportive and involved parents and carers do better at school
- Children enjoy using ICT
- Using ICT provides access to a wider and more flexible range of learning materials.

How learning at home with ICT benefits children

Home use of ICT by children:

- Improves their ICT skills
- Offers them choice in what they learn and how they learn it
- Supports homework and revision
- Improves the presentation of their work
- Connects learning at school with learning at home
- Makes learning more fun.

All this can lead to better performance at school and an improved standard of work. For further information go to:

Parents Centre: www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet

From the menu choose either **Links by topic** or **Links by age** for details of websites that will support children's learning.

Using the Internet safely at home

Whilst many Internet Service Providers offer filtering systems and tools to help you safeguard your child at home, it remains surprisingly easy for children to access inappropriate material including unsuitable text, pictures and movies. Parents are advised to set the security levels within Internet Explorer or other browsers with this in mind. Locating the computer in a family area where possible, not a bedroom will enable you to supervise your son or daughter as they use the Internet. Also consider mobile phones and games consoles and other devices that can access the Internet. However, don't deny them the opportunity to learn from and enjoy the wide variety of material and games available on the Internet. Instead discuss with them some simple rules for keeping safe online and making sure they understand their importance.

Simple rules for keeping your child safe

To keep your child safe they should:

- Ask permission before using the Internet and discuss what websites they are using
- Only use websites you have chosen together or a child friendly search engine
- Only email people they know (why not consider setting up an address book?)
- Ask permission before opening an email sent by someone they don't know
- Not use their real name when using games or websites on the Internet (create a nickname)
- Never give out any personal information about themselves, friends or family online including home address, phone or mobile number
- Never arrange to meet someone they have 'met' on the Internet without talking to an adult first; always take an adult to meet in a public place
- Never tell someone they don't know where they go to school or post any pictures of themselves in a school uniform
- Only use a webcam with people they know
- Tell you immediately if they see anything they are unhappy with.

Using these rules

Go through these rules with your child and pin them up near your computer. It is also a good idea to regularly check the Internet sites your child is visiting e.g. by clicking on History and Favourites. Please reassure your child that you want to keep them safe rather than take the Internet access away from them. Create a dialogue and a relationship of mutual respect as far as the Internet is concerned.

For further information go to:

CEOP: www.ceop.gov.uk

Think U know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childnet: www.childnet-int.org

Some useful websites

When searching the Internet we recommend you use one of the following child friendly search engines:

Ask Jeeves for kids:
www.askkids.com

Yahoo! Kids
www.kids.yahoo.com

CBBC Search:
www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/search

Kidsclick:
www.kidsclick.org

National Education Network:
www.nen.gov.uk/tandl