



Keep Children Safe Online — Parent Checklist

A practical, UK-specific guide for parents and carers. No scare stories — just clear actions.

THE FIVE ESSENTIALS

- 1 Talk regularly, without judgement.** Make online life a normal topic — ask who they talk to, what games they play, what feels weird.
- 2 Agree family rules together.** Screen times, shared spaces for devices, no secret accounts, and a promise that telling you is always safe.
- 3 Keep accounts private.** Private profiles, no public posts, no location sharing. Review settings on every new app.
- 4 Strong unique passwords + 2FA.** A password manager for the family; two-factor authentication on every account that offers it.
- 5 Teach the pause.** Before sharing personal information, photos, school details or live location: pause, think, ask.

FIVE WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH

Secrecy about devices — hiding screens, new apps in hidden folders, deleting messages.

Gifts, money or in-game items with no explanation.

Pressure to move chats to a private app (WhatsApp, Discord DM, Snapchat).

Staying up late online, or becoming withdrawn and anxious after being online.

A new "friend" who is an adult, or an unusually close online-only relationship.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED — WHAT TO DO

Stay calm, listen, avoid blame. Shame is the predator's best ally. Say it out loud: "This is not your fault."

Preserve evidence. Don't delete chats, accounts or files. Screenshot usernames, dates and messages once, then put the device away.

Don't investigate yourself. Don't confront the suspected offender. Don't forward or share any material.

Report through the right route. CEOP for grooming/exploitation, IWF for sexual images of under-18s, school first for bullying.

Get help now

Immediate danger or risk to a child

Call 999

Grooming / sexual exploitation online

CEOP — ceop.police.uk

Sexual image/video of under-18 found online

IWF — iwf.org.uk

Child needs confidential support

Childline 0800 1111

Parent/carer needs advice

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Urgent mental health (not emergency)

NHS 111

Harmful content on platforms

reportharmfulcontent.com

PLATFORM CONTROLS IN 2 MINUTES

Apple: Settings Screen Time Content & Privacy Restrictions

Android: Google Family Link app

Windows: family.microsoft.com

Router: Sky/Virgin/BT/EE app parental controls

TikTok: Family Pairing + Private + DMs off

Instagram: Private + Message Controls + Hidden Words

Roblox: Account Restrictions + chat off

Fortnite/Epic: Cabined Accounts + voice chat off + spend PIN

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WE FEAR NO ONE**

Full Child Safety Hub: cyberawareuk.co.uk/child-safety | Get Help Now: cyberawareuk.co.uk/get-help-now



After an Online Abuse Report — First 24 Hours

Parents should focus on safety, calm, evidence preservation, and the right reporting route. UK guidance: don't blame the child, don't over-question, record the concern accurately.

YOUR FIRST 24 HOURS

- 1 Make sure the child is safe right now.** Immediate danger call 999. Urgent safeguarding concern police or CEOP without delay.
- 2 Reassure the child.** They are believed, not in trouble, and did the right thing by telling someone.
- 3 Do not investigate in detail.** No repeated questioning, confrontation, or trying to prove what happened yourself.
- 4 Preserve evidence.** Keep messages, usernames, links, screenshots, call logs, dates. Do not delete chats, images or accounts before advice is given.
- 5 Write down the facts.** Who said what, when, which platform, and any immediate risk to the child.
- 6 Report through the right channel.** CEOP for grooming/exploitation, IWF for illegal images, NSPCC/Childline for support.
- 7 Limit who knows.** Only people who need to know for safeguarding: school DSLs, police, social workers.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Don't remove the child's phone or computer unless needed for immediate safety or advised by a safeguarding professional.
- Don't promise secrecy if you may need to pass information to police or safeguarding staff.
- Don't punish the child by taking away support, privacy or trusted contact.
- Don't forward or re-share any suspected abuse images or videos.

"In the first 24 hours, your priorities are to keep the child safe, stay calm, preserve evidence, and report through the right route. Avoid repeated questioning or deleting messages, and only share details with people who need to know to protect the child."

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First 24 Hours: cyberawareuk.co.uk/first-24-hours-after-report | Get Help Now: cyberawareuk.co.uk/get-help-now



Supporting a Child After a Report + Preserving Evidence

Children may feel ashamed, frightened or worried they will be blamed or punished. Adults should respond calmly and without judgement.

SUPPORTING A CHILD AFTER A REPORT

- 1 Listen calmly** and let them speak at their own pace.
- 2 Tell them the abuse is not their fault.** Say it out loud and repeat it.
- 3 Do not promise secrecy.** Explain you may need to share information with people who can help keep them safe.
- 4 Keep routines as normal as possible** — school, meals, activities, bedtime.
- 5 Check in again later.** One conversation is often not enough.
- 6 Watch for changes** in sleep, mood, eating, school attendance or online behaviour.
- 7 Consider ongoing support** — school safeguarding, social care or therapeutic help where needed.

WHY PRESERVING EVIDENCE MATTERS

It helps police and safeguarding professionals understand the timeline, identify the person responsible, and protect other children.

Keep the device safe. Avoid wiping, resetting or uninstalling apps before advice is given.

Save usernames, profile links, dates, times, screenshots and platform names where possible.

Do not forward, email or re-share illegal images or videos. Use police, CEOP and IWF reporting routes instead.

Under-18 with shared sexual images? Use Childline and IWF's Report Remove for support and takedown help.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't blame the child or suggest they caused what happened.

Don't punish them for speaking up by taking away support or trusted contact.

Don't confront the suspected offender yourself.

Don't delete evidence before you have been advised what to do.

Get help now

Immediate danger or risk to a child	Call 999
Non-emergency police contact	101
Grooming / sexual exploitation online	CEOP — ceop.police.uk
Sexual image/video of under-18 found online	IWF — iwf.org.uk
Child needs confidential support	Childline 0800 1111
Under-18 image removal help	Report Remove
Parent/carer needs advice	NSPCC 0808 800 5000
Harmful content on platforms	reportharmfulcontent.com

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