

# Search safely

We all use search engines to find information online, and so do our kids. From researching school assignments or being entertained—chances are your kids are using search engines to explore online, but with that open access comes the risk of seeing inappropriate material.



## Six tips to searching safely

To help you support your kids and have confidence online, check out these six tips for finding the right stuff.

### 1. Use child-friendly search engines

As soon as your child starts exploring the internet, steer them in the direction of child-friendly search engines. These provide kid friendly content by screening out from search results inappropriate sites and material.

Try [Google Safe Search for Kids](#), [GoGooligans](#), [KidzSearch](#), [KidsClick](#), [KidRex](#) and [Swiggle](#). We recommend typing in some words first to test if any undesirable content appears in the search results, but remember some search engines contain advertising and there is always a risk that inappropriate material could still slip through.

### 2. Use safe search settings

Your home computer usually has a preferred browser to navigate the internet and most of these like [Google](#), [Bing](#) and [Yahoo! 7](#) have safe search settings to filter out inappropriate, explicit and adult-oriented content from search results. While not foolproof, they can help when kids stumble across inappropriate content when searching seemingly innocent words and phrases. Also consider opting for the safety mode on popular services such as [YouTube](#) and [iTunes](#). The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provides useful information about the safety features offered by Apple, Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox.

### 3. Protect devices

Searching the internet can place your computer at risk from viruses and other types of malware. Ensure that all devices are installed with security software that is regularly updated. Teach your kids not to accept files or open email attachments from people they don't know and trust in real life.

### 4. Bookmark preferred websites

You can help minimise the risk of your kids accessing unsuitable websites by bookmarking preferred sites accessible from their web browser. This way, they can go directly to favourite websites without having to first conduct a search to locate them online.

### 5. Check the website's safety

Check a website's safety rating before visiting it by using online search tools that help identify malicious websites. If you are worried about a game or social networking site used by your child then check its safety rating. It's simple to do this: just type in the phrase "is this website safe" into your browser, choose from one of the search results and then enter the website's URL address into the search field.

### 6. Talk about safe searching

Talk to your child about safe searching, as well as the kind of websites they can view. Realistically, you can't supervise their internet use all the time so build trust by explaining any rules and be open to their suggestions about usage. If your child has been exposed to undesirable content, whether accidentally or on purpose, talk them through what they have seen. Encourage them to speak to you about anything they find upsetting while playing games, visiting websites or social networking.