

Back to School - 5 tips for Parents around Online Safety - by Devon and Cornwall Police Officer

5 conversation pointers:

1. Try and have the conversation one-to-one and away from devices, for example while walking the dog or on the way to or from school. Without the distractions of TV / gaming consoles / phones or tablets etc is the perfect time to start the conversation.
2. Ask them for advice on how you, the parent/ carer or grandparent can keep safer online. We hear it all the time from parents saying that kids know more about technology than they do. Well, time to turn that to your advantage. Ask them how they would set up privacy controls on your phone and apps. Kids love to help and if they don't know the answer they will quickly learn it, expanding their knowledge and giving you a great opportunity to talk about the online world.
3. Never tell them that you are going to take away their phone/device. You want your child to trust you and come to you. The one thing that is going to stop them, more than anything else, is if they think they are going to lose their phone or be banned from it. For them their whole life, good and bad, revolves around their phone and if they think they are going to lose it they won't come to you.
4. Encourage them to share their online experiences. One of the best ways to do this is, is for you to share your experiences. Talk to them about how you use your phone, tablet and computer, engage them by again asking them what they think the best apps are at the moment and what they think you should have on your phone. By opening the conversation up to them you will suddenly find them telling you about the latest cool and trendy apps they use.
5. If they do come to you with a problem, then please try to stay calm and listen. It can be very easy to get swept away with the issue and start ranting and raving but remember that it has probably taken a lot of courage for them to come and talk to you. Listen first and try not to judge, once they have told you everything, then talk it through with them and try and find a solution together.

Don't forget you are not alone and there are some great websites that can help you including:-

The UK Safer Internet Centre

Internet Matters.org

Childnet

Lastly, remember - the best way to keep your child safe online is to have regular conversations with them.