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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Staying safe online

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Transcriber's Note: The logo at the top of the page is
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga Ministry of Education.

Staying safe online

Digital safety means using technology in smart and careful ways. So, you and your child can stay safe and be kind online.

What digital safety is

Knowing about risks online and learning how to deal with them is digital safety. Cyberbullying, scams, or encountering unsuitable content are some of them.

Some key aspects of digital safety include:

- protecting privacy—using strong privacy settings and thinking carefully before sharing personal details or photos
- spotting misinformation and scams—learning how to recognise fake news, online tricks, and ads that try to get you to spend money
- understanding algorithms—knowing that apps are designed to show you more of what you already like, which can make it hard to see different ideas
- being kind and respectful online—avoiding cyberbullying, treating others well, and knowing how to report harmful or unsafe behaviour.

Being aware of digital safety will help your child protect their information, devices and wellbeing. It will allow them to enjoy the online world in a positive and confident way.

Why it is important

Digital safety is an important life skill. Your child is likely to use technology every day for things like learning, talking to friends, and having fun. Knowing how to stay safe online helps them to protect their privacy, reputation, and mental health.

Being safe online also means being a good digital citizen. That means using technology in the right way, making good choices, and helping keep the internet a safe and friendly place for all.

How schools teach your child about digital safety

Digital safety is an important part of digital literacy, which is embedded across the New Zealand Curriculum. There is a specific focus on digital safety and literacy within the health and physical education, technology, and English learning areas.

Digital safety is introduced across the year levels at age-appropriate stages. In Years 1 to 3, the focus is on building foundational knowledge and skills, such as self-care and

managing relationships. As students move through the year levels, focus moves to:

- developing more sophisticated skills
- building on their growing knowledge
- increased critical literacy.

Digital literacy

Being digitally literate means knowing how to use technology to find, understand, create, and share information.

It involves thinking skills and practical know-how when using digital tools.

Critical literacy

Being critically literate means:

- looking closely at what you read, watch, or hear
- asking questions about who created it
- whose voices are included or left out, and what messages or values it promotes.

It's about understanding that people's ideas and perspectives shape all offline and online content.

At school

Your child will learn about:

- digital citizenship—how to behave responsibly and respectfully when online
- critical thinking and evaluation—how to question and make sense of the information they find online
- privacy and online safety—how to protect their personal details and stay safe when online
- technical skills and content creation—how to use digital tools confidently, not just to consume content but to create their own.

Support digital safety at home

Help your child build healthy habits

Set clear boundaries together

This could be:

- keeping devices in shared spaces, and talking about when it's okay to use them in private areas
- charging devices out of the bedrooms overnight
- taking regular breaks from screens to move, stretch, or go outside
- following the same rules as your child, to show that you are doing it too

- planning how much time will be spent on screens for fun.

Screen time: making a family technology plan—

KidsHealth: <https://tinyurl.com/c2rw3jep>

Talk with your child about their online experiences

This could involve:

- talking about why these boundaries exist and being clear that it's about staying safe and healthy, not about punishment
- chatting regularly about what each of you is watching, reading, or doing online
- agreeing on what is okay to put online and what is not—for example, "does everyone give permission to have their photos online?"
- paying attention to how your child feels after being online—if they seem upset, talk about it together.

Support their growing independence

This could involve:

- giving your child more responsibility as they get older and can show they manage their screen time well
- helping them make good choices on their own, like when to take a break or when to switch off.

Screen time: keeping children safe online—KidsHealth:

<https://tinyurl.com/mprezpcb>

Help your child protect their privacy and keep themselves safe online

Protect their accounts

This could involve:

- helping your child create strong, unique passwords for each app or game
- reminding them not to share passwords with friends, even close ones
- encouraging them to log out of shared or public devices when finished.

Help them maintain privacy and protect their online identity

This could be:

- checking privacy settings together on their favourite apps, and talking about what feels safe to share and what does not
- talking about how keeping personal details private helps keep them safe
- recommending that they do not post anything they would not want their grandparents, teachers or future employers to see
- reminding your child that once something is online it can be hard to remove completely.

Keeping accounts safe with online security—Netsafe:
<https://tinyurl.com/nhjcap8k>

Help your child engage positively online

Encourage positive and respectful online behaviour

This could be:

- talking about how what they share, and what others share about them, shapes their online reputation
- encouraging respectful behaviour online
- reminding your child to pause and think before sharing photos and videos
- praising them for being kind, thoughtful, and responsible online
- reassuring your child that it's okay to take breaks from being online
- supporting them to understand that real friendships do not depend on being on social media all the time.

Support safe and confident online choices

This could involve:

- letting your child know that if they see or receive something that feels uncomfortable or inappropriate, they can talk to you
- discussing how online challenges and trends can sometimes pressure people to join in, even when it feels wrong
- talking about what to do if a friend posts something risky or unkind.

Encourage your child to create digital content

This could involve:

- encouraging them to be creative with apps or digital tools
- helping them make a short video, story, or piece of art to share
- talking about using their own ideas and giving credit if they use others' work
- showing interest in what they make and praising their effort.

How to talk to your whānau about online safety—Netsafe:

<https://tinyurl.com/y57ejx73>

Help your child think critically about what they see online

Encourage your child to question, analyse and evaluate online content

This could involve:

- encouraging them to pause and think before they click, "like", or share
- talking together about where information comes from
- watching or reading online content together, and discussing how it makes you both feel
- discussing how apps are run by algorithms that show more of what you already like
- helping them explore different sources of content so they see different viewpoints
- warning them to be wary of communications from people they do not know.

Media literacy—Netsafe: <https://tinyurl.com/kvrx8uyp>

Model being a good digital citizen

Overall, try to model being a responsible digital citizen yourself. Show your child how you:

- practice honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour in your use of digital technology
- respect people's rights to privacy and freedom of speech
- use and develop critical thinking skills in the online world
- use digital technologies to relate to others in positive, meaningful ways.

Digital citizenship—Keep it real online:

<https://tinyurl.com/mupxf936>

More information

Netsafe has a comprehensive selection of material to support parents and whānau families to help children and young people navigate the digital world or online environment.

<https://netsafe.org.nz/>

Netsafe's parental toolkit is a great place to find all the information you need to support your child.

<https://netsafe.org.nz/parents-and-caregivers>

Hector's World is a useful resource for younger children.

<https://www.ectorsworld.com/nz/parents>

Keep It Real Online provides safety tools and advice to help support your family develop good online safety habits.

<https://www.keepitrealconline.govt.nz/parents>

KidsHealth includes information about screen time and how to make a family technology plan.

<https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/>

These resources may not be in alternate formats.

For more information, visit

<https://www.education.govt.nz/parents-and-caregivers/schools-year-0-13/parent-portal/digital-safety> or shortened url <https://tinyurl.com/4dz6smdd>

End of Staying safe online