A parent's guide to internet safety

With young people spending an increasing amount of time online it's only natural that we should want to make sure they are safe. In their Futures FAB and ICT lessons students learn about some of the dangers in the online world but as is often the case, knowing something and acting upon it are two very different things. To help you support your child in staying safe, we've put together this brief guide. It's by no means exhaustive and there's plenty more information out there but hopefully it'll give you a head start and signpost where to go for more information.

Our Top Tips.

1. Talk to your children (*note talk, not interrogate*) about what they do online. Ask them if they can tell you the dangers/what others may be concerned about and can they tell you how they should deal with these concerns?
2. Set up parental controls to limit the adult content that comes up on web searches (see below for instructions).
3. Have rules/guidelines e.g. no more than 45 minutes on the net without a 5 minute break away from the computer.
4. Avoid having ICT in their bedroom and if this is impractical, certainly impose (*and enforce*) a curfew for using such devices.
5. Teach them 'online' manners in the same way you would for face to face contact. Increasing numbers of young people are finding themselves in trouble for saying things online that they'd never say in person as they falsely assume this doesn't count!
6. Talk to other parents. What are they doing with their children? Do they have rules?
7. Checking internet history can be useful but be sure not to be confrontational over what you find. You want your child to feel they can talk to you about their online life.
8. Instil good routines early. If you share online experiences such as playing educational games with your child at a young age, they'll be used to sharing these experiences and it'll be easier to discuss online content as they get older.
9. Google your child's name (and yours) to see how much information is already in cyberspace. If there's more than you'd like, how did it get there? If they have social media accounts such as Facebook, do they know how to manage the privacy settings?
10. Search the web yourself for 'parents' guides' to see what useful information is out there.

Useful links and practical advice

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/
This site has a wealth of useful information and guidance and is produced by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre. It's your one stop shop for most information but to save you browsing the entire site we've included links to some of the more practical *how to* guides below.

Parental controls vary depending upon your internet provider. Follow the links below to see the advice for yours.

BT: http://bt.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/13209/c/346
TALKTALK: http://sales.talktalk.co.uk/product/homesafe
VIRGIN: http://my.virginmedia.com/my-apps/security.html
PLUS NET: http://www.plus.net/support/security/spam/plusnet_protect_user_guide.shtml#settingparentalcontrols
SKY: http://help.sky.com/security

For many children, it's not only traditional PC's that bring them into online communities. Many go online using their games consoles. Below are links to three of the most popular, explaining how to ensure your children remain safe whilst using them online.

XBOX: http://support.xbox.com/en-GB/billing-and-subscriptions/parental-controls/xbox-live-parental-control
PS3: http://manuals.playstation.net/document/en/ps3/current/basicoperations/parentallock.html
NINTENDO WII: http://www.nintendo.com/consumer/systems/wii/en_na/ht_settings.jsp?menu=pc