



# Getting online safely for parents & families

Knowing how to get online safely is important for all families in Australia. Read our tips to help you get started.

# Being safe online

Being informed and taking a few extra steps can help to increase your family's safety online.

## Online security

Some of the main online risks include:

- Viruses which can be spread through malicious links in text messages and email attachments. Only click on links or attachments you are expecting from websites or personal contacts you know
- Trojans, which are programs that try to trick you into installing them.
- Spyware, programs that steal personal information or passwords.
- Unreliable websites and people trying to cause harm to others.

There are steps you can take to protect yourself and your computer from online threats.

1. Use a firewall, which helps protect your computer from unauthorised access from the internet.
2. Keep your internet security software up to date.
3. Use antivirus software, which helps find, stop and remove viruses.
4. Use anti-spyware software, which helps stop your data being stolen.
5. Think twice before opening emails or click on links in emails - and especially email attachments - from people you don't know.
6. Deal with businesses online that you know to have a good reputation. Search for reviews about a company before you buy.
7. Make regular backups of all the information on your computer, for example saving it to an online storage space like google Drive. If your computer does become infected, you will still have access to all your important data.

## Protecting your personal information

Sometimes you will need to provide personal information online like your name, date of birth, phone number. But, there are limits to how much information you should share. For more information read up on your consumer rights.

- Only provide the minimum information required to legitimate organisations if it's needed to verify your identity or complete a transaction. Always check the website is trustworthy first.
- Avoid posting personal information to public forums such as social media. This information can be used by criminals for identity theft.
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- Reputable companies have policies on how they care for personal information. Read their privacy policies on their websites.

Laws govern the use of personal information by private companies.

- In Australia, the Privacy Act 1988 protects how organisations use your personal information.
- The Freedom of Information Act may apply to information you provide to government bodies.
- For further information on consumer rights or up to date information on protecting yourself from scams, please visit the ACCC:  
<https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers>

## Buying online

Buying things online can be really convenient. But, it is important that you take a few extra precautions before you make any purchases.

- Check the reviews of the company/person you are buying from. The more positive reviews they have, the more reliable they tend to be. Do check if the reviews seem legit or if it has been an automatic review bot. Check the privacy and return policies on the website so you know where you stand before you enter your personal details.
- Purchase through online payment services like Paypal or a credit card as you have some buyer protection
- Use secure sites when making online payments. If they have https (not just http) in their web address, they are likely to have encryption in place. But - check other facts about them too - this does not mean they are reliable or trustworthy! It can still be a scam.

## Child safety online

Children are exposed to wide sections of society online and need to be guided and protected in that as they are with the real world:

- Viewing non age explicit materials.
- Sharing personal information.
- Bullying and harassment.

Social media is a place where inappropriate approaches or grooming\* can occur. be aware of who your child is communicating with on the internet. Talk with you child about their online friends and share in the fun of what they are doing to maintain visibility.

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

There are a few precautions you can take to help children stay safe online.

1. Create a safe and trusted relationship with your child so they feel comfortable and able to come to you with any concerns or problems they may have encountered
2. Create the child's own user account for the computer.
3. Switch on parental controls for that user account.
4. For Google, turn SafeSearch on, and for Bing or Yahoo, set SafeSearch to 'strict'.
5. Set YouTube to 'restricted', along with any other video sites.
6. Talk to the child about possible online dangers. Show them the helpful resources on the eSafety Commissioner website.
7. Set up a family tech agreement outlining what children are and aren't allowed to do online.
8. If a child has accidentally ended up in a dangerous situation online, report it to the eSafety Commissioner at:  
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>.

## Keep learning

Check out our website [learning.goodthingsfoundation.org.au](https://learning.goodthingsfoundation.org.au) to learn more about what you can do online.

Parents can also contact The Smith Family for support to get online.

*This article was written by Good Things Foundation Australia in partnership with The Smith Family. December 2022.*