



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts



MEDIA RELEASE

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Keeping our kids safe online during COVID-19

A new guide to online safety for parents and carers has specific tips and advice for this time when children are spending more time online because of the response to COVID-19.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, and the eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, are encouraging parents and carers to take some simple steps to help keep their kids safe online.

Minister Fletcher said that as Australians respond to COVID-19, we are using the internet more than ever to work, learn, socialise and be entertained.

“The upcoming school holiday period will be very different for Australian families – and children will be spending a lot of time online,” Minister Fletcher said.

“Parents and carers can take some simple steps to manage the risks kids can face online – including cyberbullying and unwanted contact from strangers. This time at home is a good opportunity for parents to start the online safety chat with their kids.

“The eSafety Commissioner is here to help keep families safe, offering practical tools that empower parents and carers to be a positive influence in their kids’ online lives.”

Higher use of the internet during the COVID-19 crisis has been accompanied by a 40 per cent spike in reports to eSafety across its reporting areas.

eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said there is a real need for information and advice and the new [*COVID-19 Global Safety Advice for Parents and Carers*](#), is already helping Australian families to stay safe online.

“Our 2018 National Parents Survey found that 95 per cent of parents agreed they needed more information about keeping their kids safe online and that’s why we’re here to help,” Ms Inman Grant said.

“The online environment can change quickly and the three biggest concerns of parents that we see are their child’s privacy, approaches from strangers and how to tell when their child has had a bad experience online.”

eSafety's top tips for parents in protecting their kids online include:

- using parental controls in apps and devices to monitor and limit what your child does online
- setting time limits for using devices during non-school hours
- keeping your kids in open areas of the home when using their devices
- turning on or reviewing privacy settings to restrict who contacts your child in apps and games, and
- keeping engaged through co-view and co-play by joining in with your child's online activities.

For more information and resources in online safety this school holiday period visit:

www.esafety.gov.au

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Background

COVID-19 Global Online Safety Advice for Parents and Carers 10 top tips for protecting children online:

1. **Build an open trusting relationship around technology** so your child knows they can come to you if something goes wrong or does not feel right online.
2. **Co-view and co-play with your child online** to better understand what they are doing and why they enjoy an app, game or website.
3. **Build good habits** and help your child develop digital intelligence and social and emotional skills.
4. **Empower your child** with strategies to deal with negative online experiences.
5. **Use devices in open areas of the home** so you can be aware of and manage who your child interacts with.
6. **Set time limits that balance time spent in front of screens with offline activities**, a family technology plan can help.
7. **Know the apps, games and social media sites that your kids are using**, making sure they are age appropriate and learn how to limit the messaging and online chat and location sharing functions.
8. **Check the privacy settings** to make sure your child's profile is set to the strictest privacy settings.
9. **Use available technologies to set up parental controls on devices.**
10. **Be alert to signs of distress** and know where to go for more advice and support.