**Setting Online Boundaries - Parent Guide**

Exploring online boundaries and how they can have a positive effect on your child’s life

**Why do online boundaries work?**

Setting online boundaries can make your child feel safer online and help them to avoid inappropriate apps, games and content. Without clear and consistent guidelines, a child can misuse tech or find themself in a risky situation.

They can also help your child understand when, where and how to use screens – which will encourage them to recognise how much is good for them.

**What should I consider?**

Firstly, think about your child’s age and personality – and what might be best for them. For example, if they are easily affected by unrealistic images or personal comments made by others, some social media platforms may not be right for them.

Understanding what your child does online can help you make the right decisions. For instance, if they love gaming, you need to know what games might be appropriate – and how much game time is enough.

**Consistency and negotiation**

Be careful not to let boundaries slip. This doesn’t mean you cannot have different rules for weekends and school nights – but if boundaries regularly shift, they become less effective.

It is also ok to negotiate. Children will naturally push their boundaries as they grow, and you should always listen to their opinion. The more you involve your child in the process, the more they will believe in their own boundaries and intuition.

**Lead by example**

Think about the example you set. Your child will be quick to pick up on your own behaviour, so if you impose strict time limits for them, but then spend all evening on social media, they may start to question the fairness of your expectations.

**What about online tools?**

You can use tools to support you and your child in enforcing boundaries – such as time limits and filters. But it is better if these tools support you, rather than dictate your decision.

Our research shows that the more children are shielded online, the less likely they are to know how to respond when things go wrong. Together, discuss the tools you have put in place, and explain they are there to enhance their online experience.

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