

# Survive The Tech Summer Holidays

## *Online Safety Tips for Parents & Carers*

Adapted from <http://swgfl.org.uk/news/News/online-safety/Survive-The-Tech-Summer-Holiday>

The weeks are ticking by and as a parent of school age children, you are counting down to the summer holidays. It can be a real juggling act - find things to do, keep them entertained while at home or while travelling at home or abroad. No doubt games consoles, tablets and the internet will also feature high on the children's' things to do list.

Technology and the Internet can sometimes be seen as a nightmare during the break, visions of children with their heads buried in a phone or tablet. The sunshine blazing outside whilst they are sat in darkened bedrooms playing games on their consoles for endless hours.

There is of course the positive side as well, long car journeys now fly by for them while watching the latest movie, airports are no longer viewed with dread for parents with children happily playing on their tablets. So love it or loath it the Internet, social media, consoles, tablets and games are here to stay. So don't fight it, embrace it - read our guide and hopefully have a great summer holiday.

### Keep It Nice

Remind your children that being kind online is up to everyone. If they do see something upsetting or abusive online, they should block and report it, and talk to you or another trusted adult about it.

### Gaming

No doubt, gaming will be one of your children's favourite pastimes this summer. Do look out for the PEGI age ratings on the games your children want to play - they work in a similar way to age ratings for films and should be respected. Games also have PEGI labels - visual icons to indicate if the game contains violence, scary content and so on, so do familiarise yourself with these and don't give in to your child's



### Sharing Photos

We all love sharing photos of days out, picnics or holidays by the pool. However it is worth thinking how you share these photos and with whom. Consider who you want to share what with and manage your lists of contacts. For example you can create a Close friends and family list of your Facebook contacts and share some pictures with a limited group of people, rather than everyone on your list of contacts - including colleagues, or mere acquaintances.

## Insurance

Sometimes it can be really difficult to actually figure out the cost of a phone or tablet but, even the most basic of smartphone can actually cost a small fortune. The cost is sometimes hidden behind a monthly contract and it's not until you're the phone is dropped on its screen or it is lost that you suddenly find out just how much these phones and tablets really cost. Do check the insurance policy on your children's phone and consider whether it is worth having one or not.

## Lost and Found

Take a look at your children's mobile phone and tablet. Most now come with an app that can allow you to locate it if your child misplaces them. However as good as these apps are they are not pin point accurate. They can give an indication of where the device last connected but that doesn't mean it is still there and the accuracy varies greatly between each device and each application.

One of the most important things these apps do though is give you the ability to lock the device and remotely wipe its data. You may have lost the phone but at least no one is looking through your photos, contacts or bank details.

## ICE

No, this isn't another challenge where someone is going to throw a bucket of cold water over you. ICE stands for In Case (of) Emergency. You create a contact in your child's phone called ICE and have the number as someone who an emergency service worker - doctor, first aider, etc - can contact. Should your child become ill or injured blue light services are trained to look for an ICE contact if they find a mobile phone.

## In App Purchases

Now is a great time to check both your parental settings both on your phone and your children's devices. We have all heard the horror stories of parents facing huge bills after their children have quite happily bought thousands of virtual gold coins not realising that it is actually costing real money. You can set a block on your child's phone to prevent them from downloading any apps which have in app purchases.

## It's Good To Talk

Parents are often reluctant to talk to their children about technology, because they feel that their children know more than they do. And that may well be true - although they may know how to use apps, tablets, consoles and other high tech gadgets what they often lack is life experience and the ability to think about their actions and consequences. So most importantly, this summer talk to your children about what they enjoy doing online, get involved in what they are doing, play games with them, ask them what that funny looking app is on their screen so you understand what they are using. You don't have to be a computer genius to impart practical safety advice.

We hope these tips are helpful and offer some practical advice. Enjoy a safe digital summer!

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