

Netsafe- Top 10 Tips for Parents

1. Know the rights roles and responsibilities of being online. The [Harmful Digital Communications Act](#) lays out clearly what online communications must not do.
2. Tech solutions (filters and firewalls) have limited impact especially as young people grow and become increasingly savvy online. They are important tools, but do have their limitations – young people can quickly work out how to get around these restrictions (ie VPNs, hot-spotting off friends, accessing unfiltered wifi)
3. Be proactive – don't wait for things to go wrong online. Be prepared and make sure that we are the soft place for our young people to fall if things don't happen the way they thought they would. Make a plan and help to prepare young people through building resilience and developing skills so that they can make safe, responsible and informed choices.
4. It takes a village – school can't do it by itself – everyone has a role to play – Schools, parents, wider community, young people and Support services (including Netsafe). We all need to share the same expectations and be singing from the same song sheet etc.
5. Have conversations and avoid assumptions. The only people who truly understand what is happening for young people online are the young people themselves. We see things differently to how young people see things and we need to make sure we are listening to them.
6. You don't have to know everything – but you do have to know where to go for the information you need. Stay connected and in touch with what young people are doing online. If you don't understand it, try it.
7. Privacy and keeping things private. Young people need to understand the impact of their digital footprint (we are calling it a digital tattoo now as it doesn't wash away). They need an awareness of the role of passwords and the importance of keeping them private.
8. Screentime – more important that the length of time online, is the quality of the time that is spent online. What is it our young people are doing when they are online? Are they communicating, creating or consuming? 30 mins consuming mindless YouTube videos versus 30 mins of active, creative learning? Families need to find the balance between time online and offline that best suits their family. Are young people interacting in family activities? Are they eating and sleeping well? are they happy to disconnect when asked?
9. Social Media – 13+ age limit. Social spaces online were created for adults and there are a number of challenges that arise when we allow young people to co-share space with adults. They are likely to be exposed to adult situations and content and in space where we are not on hand to support them. We know that Social Media intensifies the emotional responses/ impact and prolongs exposure. Bullying and online challenges is now 24/7 with an unknown audience and the longevity of what is posted increases the fallout and impact.
10. Contact Netsafe at any time. Text 4282, phone 0508NETSAFE, help@netsafe.org.nz or via our reporting form at [netsafe.org.nz](https://www.netsafe.org.nz)