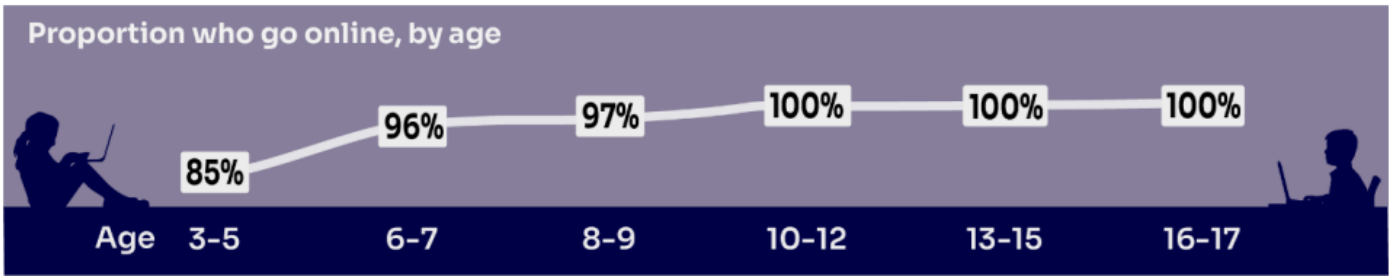
Online Safety Newsletter

Welcome to Our Spring Online Safety Newsletter!

Welcome to this term's online safety newsletter. In this newsletter, we will focus on three key areas that continue to shape children's increasingly online lives: **device use and ownership**, **supervision and parental controls**, and **healthy screentime habits**.

Device Use and Ownership

Children today are growing up surrounded by technology, and most now use the internet regularly. The graphic below shows just how central going online now is to children's everyday life.



By age 11, **9 out of 10 children** have access to their own mobile phone, and this is often their primary way of going online. Many younger children also now have **their own tablet**, which can support learning and ease of use. However, having a personal device means it becomes even more important to establish clear expectations early on.

Brick phone or smartphone?

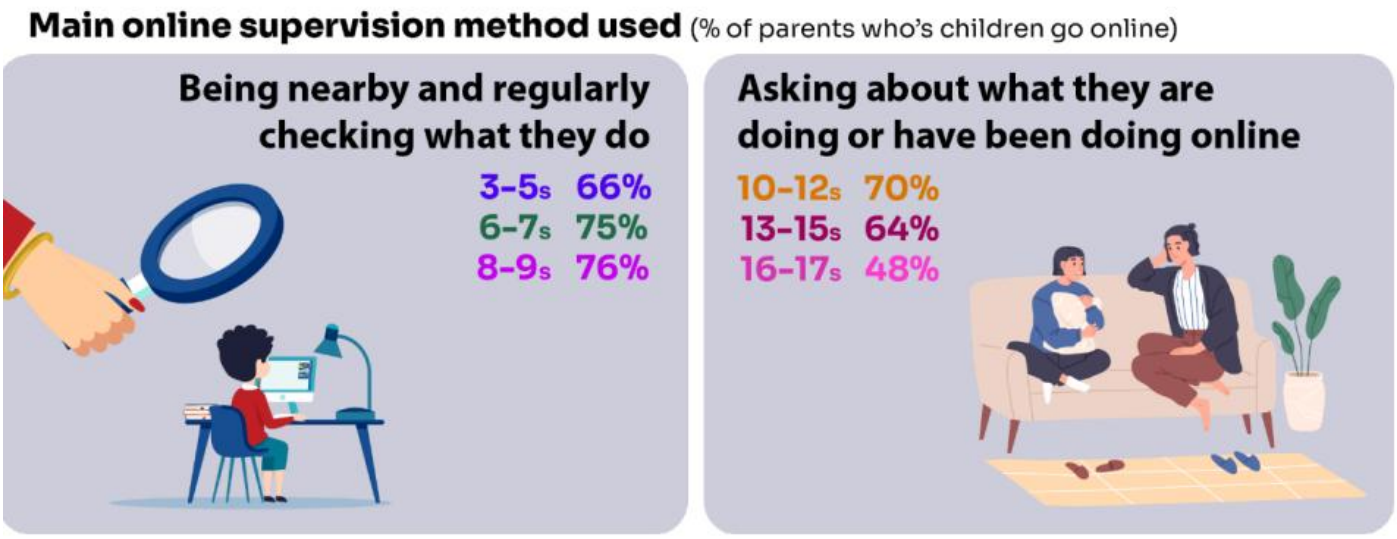
For children approaching independence, for example those who make their own journey to school, the benefit of children having their own phone are clear. However, this doesn't always mean children need a device with internet access. It's important to weight up the benefits of a basic 'brick' phone vs a smartphone as both options have strengths and limitations.

	Brick	Smart
Positives	No internet access reduces the risk of encountering inappropriate content; fewer distractions; suitable for simple communication and safety	Supports learning apps, homework platforms and school communication; enables supervised messaging; offers safety features like location sharing, emergency contacts and parental controls
Consider	Cannot access homework sites or learning tools; limited functionality as children grow more independent	Internet access requires more active management; can increase screentime and peer pressure; needs careful setup of privacy settings and parental controls

When the time comes for your child to have their own device, and whichever option your family chooses, the most important step is talking together about how the device will be used and what boundaries will help keep your child safe. Clear expectations at the start, and including your child in these decisions, can make device use much easier to manage as your child grows.

Supervision and Parental Controls

As children begin using personal devices more regularly, supervision and clear boundaries continue to play an important role. Research shows that many parents supervise younger children by **staying nearby while they use a device** and older children by **checking in with them about their time online.**



Whilst these are both effective approaches, as children grow older, supervision need naturally change. Children may become more independent online, and this can make it harder for adults to stay involved. Regular, calm conversations about what they enjoy online can help maintain openness and ensure they feel able to come to you if something worries them.

Alongside supervision, parental controls offer an additional layer of support. For them to be eo be effective, they need to be set up on:

- your home broadband,
- each individual device (such as tablets, computers and games consoles)
- individual apps and platforms your child uses.

These settings can help filter inappropriate content, manage access to apps and set time limits. They work best when combined with conversations, so children understand why the settings are in place and how they help to keep them safe. If you need any support setting these up, you can find advice at internetmatters.org/parental-controls.

Some families find it helpful to create a simple technology agreement, such as keeping devices out of bedrooms at night or having device-free meals. Agreeing these expectations together helps children understand the boundaries and gives them ownership of the routines. It also helps when adults follow the same expectations, showing that balanced technology use is something the whole family works on.

Screentime

As children gain access to their own devices, screentime often increases. Children spend an average of **3 hours per day online**, and many parents find it challenging to keep this in balance.



It's helpful to remember that not all screentime is negative. Some activities support learning, hobbies or communication. However, long periods of passive scrolling or late-night use can impact sleep and concentration. For this reason, many families find it more useful to consider **the type** of screentime rather than focusing only on the total hours.

Most devices now include tools such as **Screen Time** or **Digital Wellbeing**, which allow you to monitor usage, set app limits and create evening "downtime". These tools are especially helpful when children use their device more independently, and they work best when children understand why the limits exist and feel involved in setting them. Seeing adults make similar choices also reinforces that healthy screentime habits are something everyone works on together.

Further support

If you'd like more guidance on how to support your child online, there are lots of excellent resources available to help parents and carers understand the digital world and how to keep children safe:

- **LGfL ParentSafe** – A hub of trusted advice, guides, and videos on a wide range of online safety topics, from screen time to social media.
- **CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command)** – A national service where you can report concerns about online abuse or exploitation and get expert advice on what to do next.
- **NSPCC Online Safety** – Practical tips and tools for parents, including how to set up parental controls and start conversations about online behaviour.
- **Internet Matters** – Step-by-step guides to help you set privacy settings, manage screen time, and support your child's digital wellbeing at every age.
- **UK Safer Internet Centre** – Resources, guides, and advice to help children, parents, and educators make the internet a safer and more positive place for everyone.

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or would like advice about supporting your child online, please don't hesitate to get in touch - we're always happy to help.

Miss Joyce
Computing Lead