

Parental Controls at Home

Information for parents and carers of Greenbank pupils

Most home internet providers offer free parental controls that work on every device connected to your Wi-Fi – phones, tablets, laptops, games consoles and smart TVs. Once set up, they can switch the internet off at bedtime, block unsuitable websites and help build healthy online routines. Many families do not know these tools exist, or find them tricky to set up. The good news is that your provider will help you.

Contact your broadband provider

Ring their customer service team, use their online chat, or search "parental controls" on their website or app. Ask them to talk you through setting it up – it usually takes just a few minutes and costs nothing.

What parental controls can do

Bedtime and time limits

Set the Wi-Fi to switch off for chosen devices at set times, such as bedtime or homework time, or pause it with one tap.

Device-by-device settings

Apply different rules to each device, so your child's tablet has tighter settings than an adult's laptop.

App and game controls

Limit access to particular apps, social media or online games at certain times of day.

Website filtering

Block whole categories of unsuitable content (for example adult, gambling, violence) or individual websites.

SafeSearch

Force SafeSearch on search engines so explicit results are filtered out of searches.

Free, often app-based

Most controls are free with your broadband and can be managed from your provider's app or online account.

Questions to ask your provider

- ✓ Do you offer free parental controls or a family safety filter, and how do I turn them on?
- ✓ Can I schedule the Wi-Fi to switch off on my child's devices at set times, such as bedtime?
- ✓ Can I set different rules for different devices or family members?
- ✓ Can I block specific websites or apps, and choose which categories are filtered?
- ✓ Is there an app I can use to manage settings, pause the internet and see which devices are connected?
- ✓ How do I stop the settings being changed without my permission?

Don't forget

- **Mobile data:** home broadband controls only work on your Wi-Fi. Ask your child's mobile network to check their content filter is switched on.
- **Device settings:** phones, tablets and consoles have their own controls, such as Apple Screen Time, Google Family Link, Microsoft Family Safety, PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo family settings.
- **SafeSearch:** most search engines have a SafeSearch setting, usually found under 'Settings' (often a small cog icon).
- **Review regularly:** as your child grows, adjust settings to suit their age, maturity and needs. Controls are a safety net, not a replacement for talking together.

Top tip: set up controls together with your child where you can, and agree the times and rules as a family. Young people are more likely to accept boundaries they understand.

Supporting Your Child Online

8 steps to help your child stay safer online

1. **Explore together.** Ask your child to show you their favourite websites, apps and games and what they do on them. Show interest and let them teach you the basics.
2. **Chat about online safety little and often.** Talk about how to stay safe on new apps and in general. Ask if anything online ever worries them.
3. **Identify trusted adults.** Help your child list the adults they can go to if they are worried – you, family members, school staff and other support services.
4. **Be non-judgemental.** Reassure them you would never blame them for anything that happens online, and that you will always respond calmly.
5. **Think about others.** Remind them to consider how someone else might feel before they post or share, and to always ask permission before sharing a photo or video of someone.
6. **Keep devices in shared spaces where you can.** Charging phones and tablets downstairs overnight helps protect sleep and reduces unsupervised use late at night.
7. **Signpost age-appropriate information.** It is natural for young people to look online for information about relationships and sex. CEOP Education, Brook and The Mix offer safe, age-appropriate advice.
8. **Make sure they know about CEOP.** Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse online at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Making changes work for your child

Changes to screen time can feel unsettling, especially for young people who rely on routine and predictability. These approaches can help:

- **Explain first:** talk about any new rules before they start, and why they are being introduced.
- **Make it visual:** use a written or picture timetable showing when the internet is on and off.
- **Give warnings:** a countdown or timer before the Wi-Fi switches off avoids a sudden, upsetting stop mid-game.
- **Be consistent:** keep the same times each day and plan a calm activity for afterwards.

Useful websites

Thinkuknow (CEOP Education) – parents	www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents Advice and help sheets for parents and carers.
Thinkuknow 11–18s website	www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/ For young people: relationships, socialising online, nudes, sexual content, abuse, support and online safety.
#AskTheAwkward	www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/ask-the-awkward/ Short films and help sheets to start conversations about online relationships.
Internet Matters	www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide/ Step-by-step guides to parental controls on broadband, phones, consoles and apps.

Worried about something your child has seen or done online?

Please contact school and ask to speak to a member of the safeguarding team. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Concerns about online grooming or sexual abuse can be reported to CEOP at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Online Safety

The internet can be great for finding information, playing games and talking to my friends.



There are rules I should follow to help me stay safe online.



I do not give out personal information like my address, phone number, school or bank details.



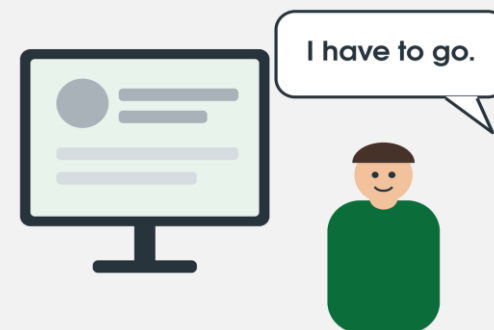
I should not talk to strangers online. If someone I don't know messages me, I can tell an adult.



People online are not always who they say they are. Sometimes they do not do what they promise.



If I feel uncomfortable online, I can leave and tell someone I trust. I will not be in trouble.



For parents and carers

Read these cards with your child at a calm time, a few at a time. Talk about what each one means in your home. You could print the pages and cut out the cards to use as prompts, or put them up near where devices are used.

My Wi-Fi at Home

I keep my passwords private. I only share them with my parents or carers.



My family has set up the Wi-Fi to help keep me safe. Some websites and apps are blocked.



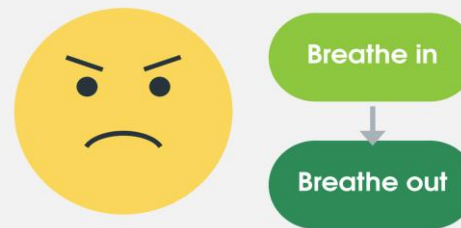
The Wi-Fi switches off at the same times each day. This is planned. It is not a punishment.



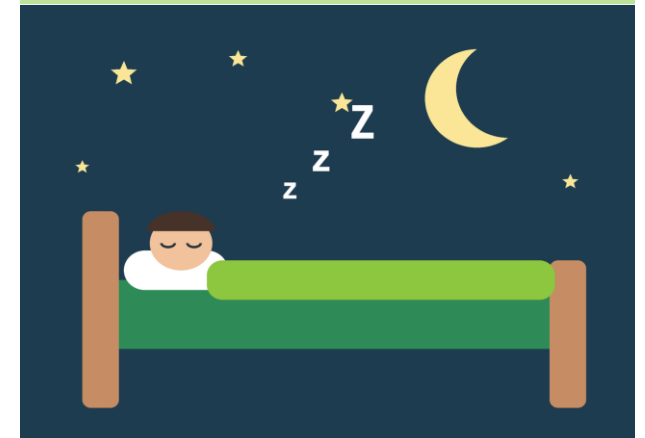
I will usually get a warning first. I can save my game or say goodbye to my friends.



I might feel annoyed when the Wi-Fi switches off. That is okay. I can take some deep breaths.



When the Wi-Fi is off, my brain and body can rest. Good sleep helps me feel ready for school.



My Wi-Fi times

Off at _____

Back on at _____

My trusted adults are...

At home: _____

At school: _____