

Protecting privacy and personal data

Empowering children to safeguard their
own privacy and the privacy of others



For parents



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Being online

Access and Inclusion

Children have the right to feel safe and have their privacy protected when they are online.



Help your younger children create a list of their favourite age-appropriate websites in the *Bookmarks* menu of their browser. In this way, they will easily access the websites you have chosen with them, without accidentally ending up on inappropriate sites.

Learning and creativity

Children need to understand how to use the internet creatively without jeopardizing their privacy by giving away too much personal data.



Show your children how to be creative online and how to post texts and images without disclosing too much personal information and jeopardising their privacy¹.

Media and Information literacy

Media and information literacy includes knowing what personal information is, and how we can use online technologies without sacrificing our privacy.



Teach your children how to use digital technologies responsibly¹.



When posting photos or videos online, they must learn to always think twice about the possible impact on their own privacy and that of others.

1. <https://rm.coe.int/easy-steps-to-help-your-child-become-a-digital-citizen/16809e2d1d>

Well-being online

Ethics and Empathy

The protection of personal data also includes safeguarding the privacy of the people we communicate with, both offline and online.

-  Ask your children how they would feel if somebody published something private about them or their family online.
-  Explain how important it is that we respect other people's privacy in exactly the same way we expect them to respect ours.

Health and well-being

When platforms or companies collect personal data, users have the right to know how their data is being used. We all have the right to have our personal data erased when it is no longer needed for the agreed purpose, or if it is being used unlawfully.

-  Get children to come to you whenever they feel their privacy may have been breached.
-  Check with them how to have personal data removed on the online platforms they use, and how to reach the Data Protection Authority in case of non-removal.

e-Presence & communication

It's important that children learn to maintain a healthy e-presence, and are fully aware of which personal data they need to protect in their online actions and communication.

-  A digital footprint is the trail of data we leave behind when using the internet. It follows us throughout our life.
-  Explain this to your children, and remind them how important it is to reveal only a minimum information about themselves when online.

Rights online

Active participation

*Children should be informed about their privacy rights in a manner **appropriate to their age and level of maturity**. Their ability to exercise their rights and act autonomously does not override the parents' power to exercise those same rights on behalf of their child, and to provide support during the process.*

-  Discuss as a family your concerns, ideas and expectations about privacy and the ways that personal data should be protected.
-  Create a family charter, where you write a list of actions your family will take to safeguard everyone's privacy, offline and online.

Rights and responsibilities

As young people are often the most avid users and early adopters of online technology, they should be encouraged to express their opinion about online rights and responsibilities. What do they know and think about the GDPR?

-  Look up the Terms and Conditions with your children on one of their favourite apps or social networks.
-  Do they understand what they are agreeing to and the things (photos, texts...) they are giving away when they accept them? Do they understand that they are also signing up to responsibilities such as respecting age restrictions?

Privacy and security

Children should learn to be wary when on- or offline services request personal data from them.

-  Give your children clear examples of what types of data are best not disclosed in public, and why.
-  Remind them that they should always ask you before publishing any personal information online, at least until they show they understand privacy sufficiently to act autonomously.

Rights online

Consumer awareness

To navigate wisely on eCommerce sites, consumers need to understand how to check the trustworthiness of a website, and how to disclose a minimum of personal data.

-  Children shouldn't be allowed to make purchases without an adult present.
-  Teach them to avoid websites, games, quizzes, and other platforms that ask for too much personal information, or that prompt them to click a link or download a file to be able to use their services.

Empowering children to safeguard their own privacy and the privacy of others

Other Council of Europe publications on Digital Citizenship Education

- ▶ Educating for a video game culture – A map for teachers and parents (2021)
- ▶ Easy steps to help your children become a Digital Citizen (2020)
- ▶ Keeping young citizens busy at home during the Corona crisis (2020)
- ▶ Parenting in the digital age – positive parenting strategies for different scenarios (2020)
- ▶ Digital Citizenship Education Handbook (2019)
- ▶ Bullying: perspectives, practice and insights (2017)
- ▶ Internet Literacy Handbook (2017)

Further information available at:
www.coe.int/education

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