

Online Safety for Parents & Carers

Giles Hill
Digital Strategy and
Computing Lead

1

Current context

- * Mass of new media, online services, products and devices over past decade.
- * What does Screen Time mean?
- * It is *your* judgment that matters for your home.

2

Crime and Legislation

- * Online abuse and crime statistics.
- * Age of digital consent.
- * Legislation coming into place – what do you feel is suitable?

3

Actions by home and school

- * **RULE:** Restrict; Understand; Limit; Explain.
- * School curriculum delivery.
- * Using the free management technologies that manufacturers provide.

4

Further help and points of discussion

- * Extra points for managing devices in the home.
- * Seeking regular support around online safety.

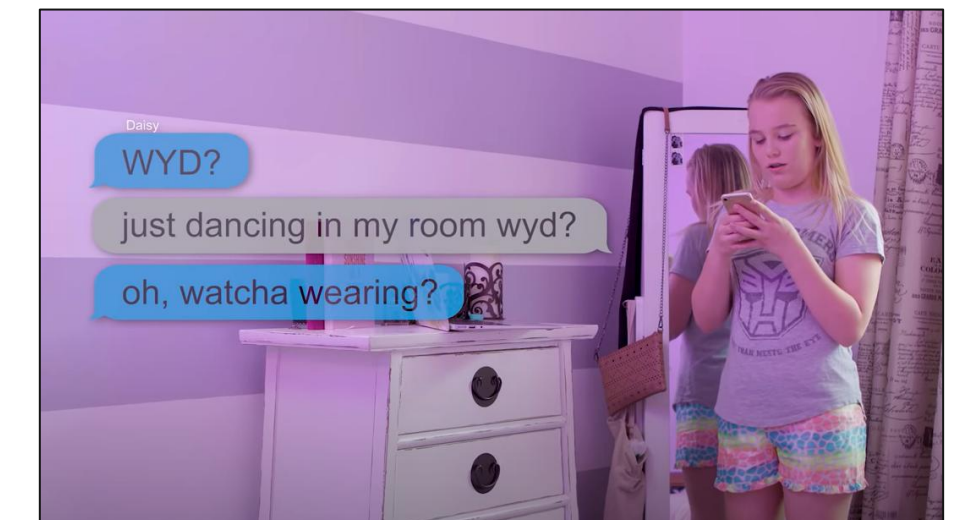
Ongoing developments in Online Safety

- * **Flood of systems and unregulated content have pervaded our lives over the last ten+ years. This is not an easy time for parents!**
- * **A complex environment to navigate, yet do not dismiss your convictions and pursuit of making things work well for your family.**
- * **‘Screen time’ is a useful term but also lacks the nuance that we need. Some activities with screens are regarded as worthwhile and beneficial – other activities may well be a huge waste of time!**
- * **Physical and mental health are both factors that need consideration when planning for the best everyday balance for our families.**

Facebook and Instagram suspected to be 'too addictive'



Briefing: China launches two campaigns to 'clean up the internet'



Keep kids off Roblox if you're worried, its CEO tells parents

Technology Has Broken Authoritative Parenting. Here's How We Fix It.

 Parent Zone
2,352 followers



Benefits of regular physical activity on children (and adults)

* **Note the emphasis on mental health, concentration and positive self-image.**

* **Clearly making time for regular physical exercise in our lives is beneficial, but perhaps more so than we sometimes accept.**

* **Not easy with busy lives and the fairly long and dark winters of UK / Cornwall – yet certainly worth it!**



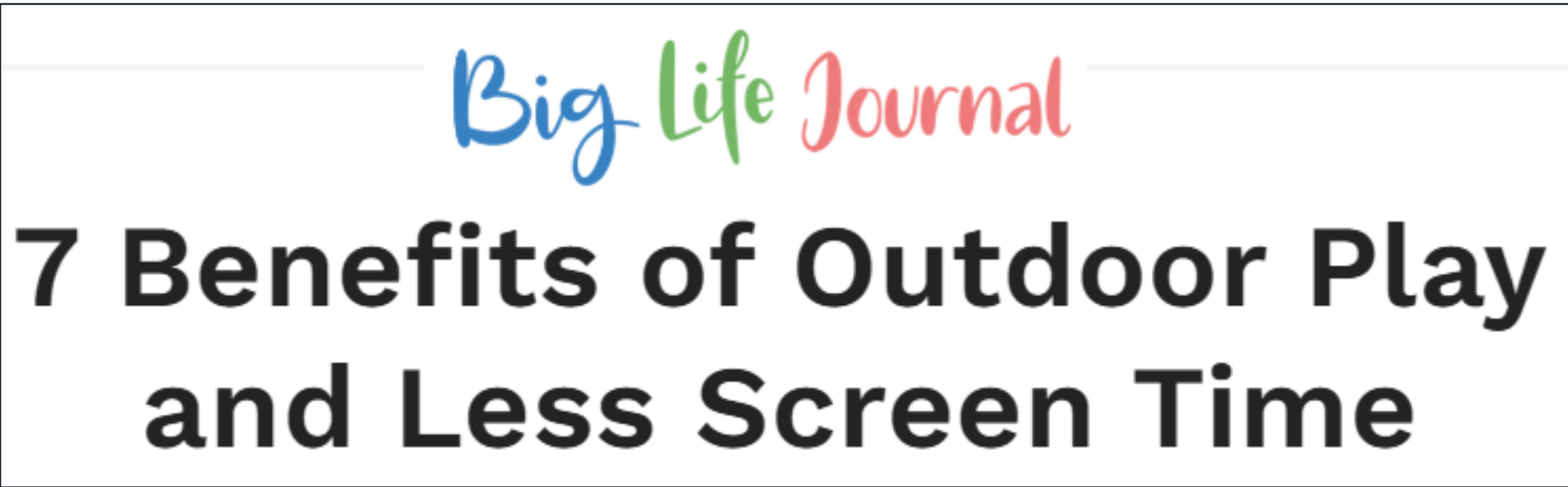
Regular exercise has lots of health benefits for children and young people, such as:

- improving fitness
- providing an opportunity to socialise
- increasing concentration
- improving academic scores
- building a stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles
- encouraging healthy growth and development
- improving self-esteem
- improving posture and balance
- lowering stress
- encouraging a better night's sleep

Keeping it fun

It's important to encourage your child and find activities they enjoy. This way your child will not find the exercise a chore and they are more likely to stick at it.

The type of activity depends on the individual. So exercise can be team-led such as football or basketball, joining a club or having lessons such as tennis, dance or golf, or activities with family and friends such as a bike ride, going for a walk or swimming.



Recent statements from UK consultant psychiatrist and medical director, Samir Shah

*** Suggests we should all be aware of the quantity and quality of 'screen time' that children (and adults) experience in daily routines.**

*** Children who do not experience time away from screens are potentially affected in areas such as decision making, focus and attention, and language development.**

Is the brain of a child more vulnerable to screen exposure effects than that of an adult?

“Children’s brains are like sponges that are soaking up experiences at an incredible rate,” says Dr Shah.

“Key developmental periods particularly before the age of five and during the pre-teen years are when the brain undergoes the most rapid growth.

“Too much screen time during these stages could have longer-lasting effects compared to adults.”

Are there any visible changes in brain scans of children who consume large amounts of screen time?

“Research has shown that MRI scans noted physical changes in the brains of children who spend a lot of time on screens,” says Dr Shah.

“These include thinner areas involved in decision-making, altered connections in regions that control focus, attention and less grey matter in areas crucial for language.

“While this does not necessarily mean damage, it does suggest that heavy screen use can lead to the brain adapting in different ways. It can be seen as altered adaptations and disruption.”

What may be the right way to approach this?

“The key here is balance and careful management,” advises Dr Shah.

“Encourage outdoor play, family meals without devices, set clear screen-free times or as we call it digital detox, such as before bed.”

Rapid change and a wake-up call for adults?

- * **The public discourse around this area continues to progress at speed.**
- * **Clear that families are becoming more and more aware of the risks and downsides to children having free access to technologies, particularly smartphones and social media.**
- * **Further engagement in the issues should be positive as we all consider what the best steps are for our families and communities.**

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Netflix hit should be 'wake-up call' for parents

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Sir Gareth Southgate: Boys need role models not gaming and porn

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Press release

Government to drive action to improve children's relationship with mobile phones and social media

Government launches consultation on children's social media use and bans phones in schools to protect young people's wellbeing and ensure safer online experiences.

From: [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#), [Department for Education](#), [The Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP](#) and [The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP](#)

Published 19 January 2026



A safer digital childhood. We're launching a national conversation to gather views and drive action to keep children safe online.

‘Screen Time’

- * This catch-all phrase evokes images of zombified children with eyes glued to devices. Is this always the case?
- * There is a lot to consider when thinking about the pros and cons of the screen-based activities we – and our children – consume and interact with in modern life.
- * Staying aware of the content our children are engaging with is important, as is keeping discussion with children as open as possible – we want them to go to trusted adults if there is a concern.

What are some of the most positive screen time experiences you can think of?

The Conceptual and Methodological Mayhem of “Screen Time”

[Linda K Kaye](#)^{1,*}, [Amy Orben](#)^{2,3}, [David A Ellis](#)⁴, [Simon C Hunter](#)^{5,6}, [Stephen Houghton](#)⁶

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SCREENS.
IT’S WHAT’S ON THEM
THAT COUNTS.

A parent’s guide to screen time

Child development expert Dr Amanda Gummer shares her top ten tips for using screens and how they can be a powerful tool for children and families.

♥ Loved

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What are some of the most negative screen time experiences you can think of?

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How social is social media?

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Can video games be a positive experience?
When and how might they be negative?

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'Screen Time'

- * There are various sources of guidance available that reference 'Screen time'.
- * These guides can be of use around this area of concern. However, remember that activities involving screens can be extremely varied. Use your own best judgment around safe and balanced use.



The RCPCH have developed four key questions for families to use as a guide to examine their screen time:

- 1 Is screen time in your household controlled?
- 2 Does screen use interfere with what your family want to do?
- 3 Does screen use interfere with sleep?
- 4 Are you able to control snacking during screen time?

Legislative context

- * **Digital Age of Consent** refers to the age at which an individual is able to volunteer their own personal data to a company for marketing purposes.
- * In 2018 it was set at 16 by the EU alongside GDPR legislation.
- * Some countries chose to lower this age. Sweden, Denmark and the UK all lowered the age to 13, in line with the USA.
- * Germany and the Netherlands all maintained the age of 16. France opted for 15.
- * There has been some pressure to raise the digital age of consent from 13 to 16, including through the [Safer Phones Bill](#), though the reach of this bill has been watered down.

What is the Digital Age of Consent?

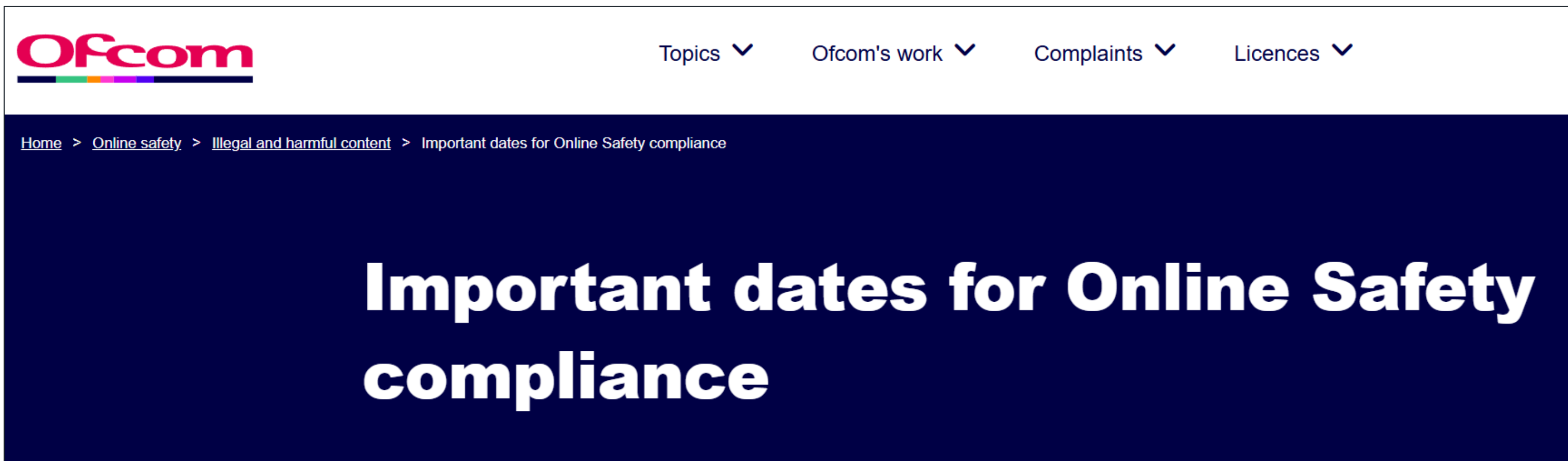
Why are parents flooding MPs with demands to ban social media?

OFCOM regulation 2025 / 2026

- * Timetable of regulation builds over this time period, hopefully influencing the direction of companies operating within the UK, even if they are based overseas.
- * OFCOM continues to receive significant criticism, suggesting that they will need to go further in order to achieve the change that children need over coming years.

Ofcom accused of prioritising interests of tech firms over child safety online

Watchdog's new codes of practice are not strong enough, says children's commissioner for England



The screenshot shows the Ofcom website header with the logo and navigation links: Topics, Ofcom's work, Complaints, and Licences. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Online safety > Illegal and harmful content > Important dates for Online Safety compliance. The main content area has a dark blue background with the text 'Important dates for Online Safety compliance' in white.

Ofcom

Topics ▼ Ofcom's work ▼ Complaints ▼ Licences ▼

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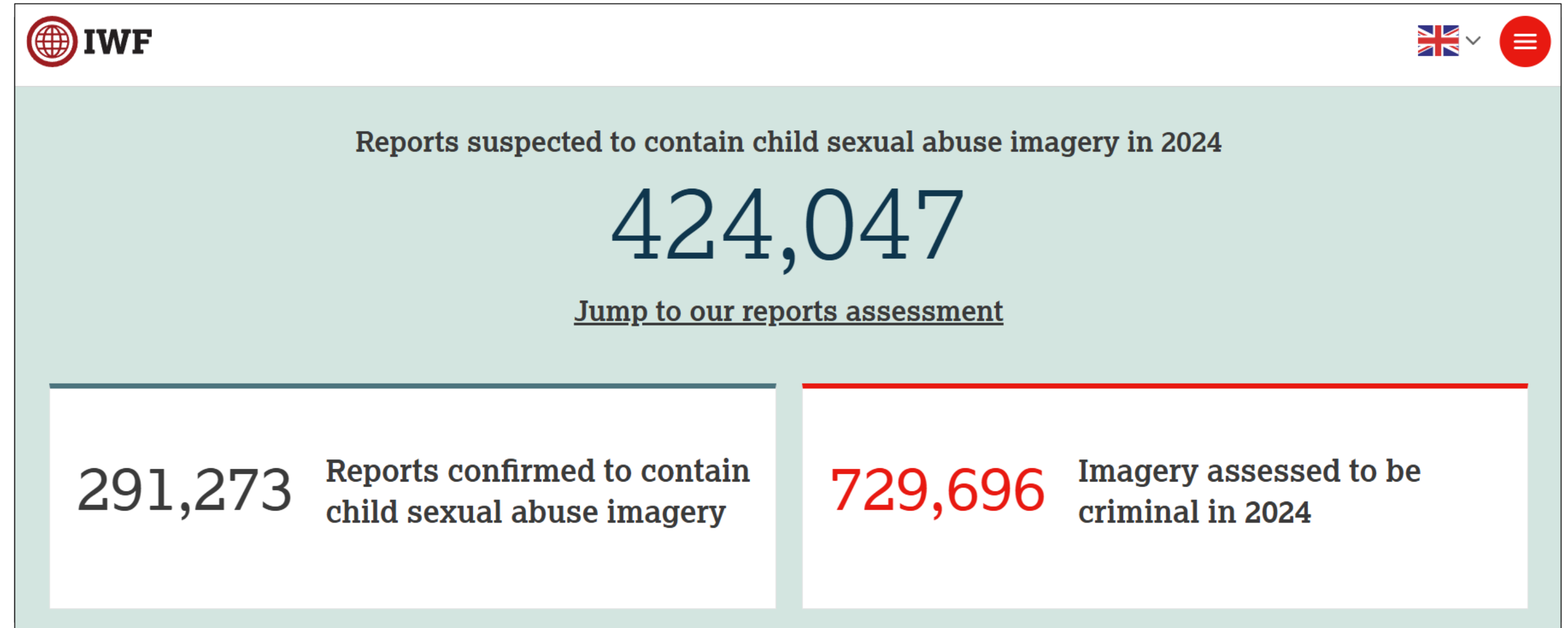
Important dates for Online Safety compliance

Online abuse and crime

* **Continuing rise of crime committed in relation to exploitation of children.**

* **Ever important that parents have restrictions in place, and are aware of what their children are doing online.**

* **Ever important that children have an adult to turn to if things go wrong.**




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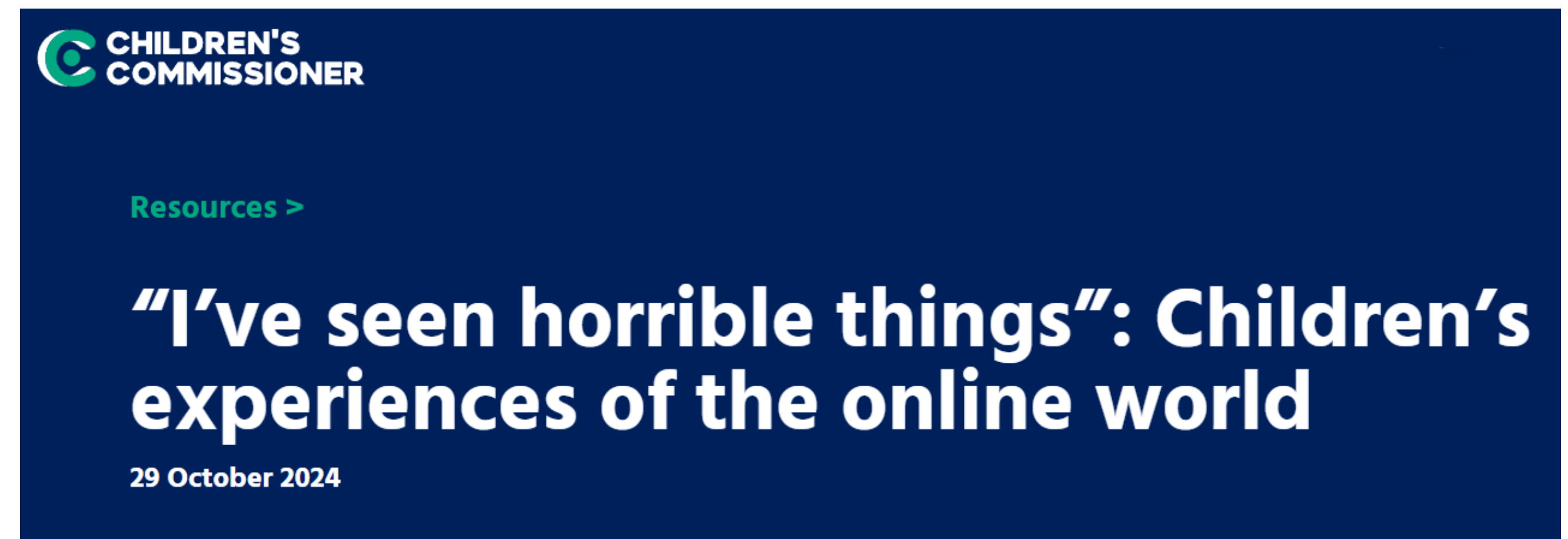
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Pupils get rare alert over dangers of sextortion

🕒 2 days ago

Children's Commissioner

- * **Multitude of reports which are regularly updated, surveying the use of online services by children.**
- * **Recording children's opinions and experiences.**



Acceleration in concern

- * **Negative effects of social media**
- * **Inappropriate content and contact**
- * **Misinformation including generative AI concerns**
- * **You do not need to look far to find concern and legal cases in this area with a huge acceleration over the past couple of years.**

Harry and Meghan call for stronger social media protections for children



'A predator in your home': Mothers say chatbots encouraged their sons to kill themselves

8 November 2025

35 hours a week

The average time UK teens spend on their smartphones – equivalent to a full-time job

The University of Birmingham, 2025

Over 60% of the 11- to 13-year-olds who had seen pornography said their viewing of pornography was mostly “unintentional”.

Children described stumbling across pornography through unwitting Google searches, receiving links from friends, adverts or pop-ups, or being shown videos on a friend's phone.

Kate warns too much screen time damages family life

Engaging with & helping school communities

- * An initiative to guide families to the most effective approaches – in simplest possible terms.
- * The initiative brings parents & carers together to take collective action on this issue. As highlighted by many observers, collective action can have a significant effect upon this area.

- Restrict
- Understand
- Limit
- Explain

FAMILIES & SCHOOLS: COLLECTIVE ACTION

TOGETHER, LET'S PROTECT CHILDHOODS FROM UNSUITABLE TECHNOLOGIES

Restrict

* Keep devices out of private spaces such as bedrooms. Only using devices in shared home areas is the best physical way to stay aware of your child's screen-based choices and activity.

* ALWAYS restrict and time-limit devices with the free tools supplied by major tech providers. e.g. Family Link (Google); Parent Dashboard (Amazon); Family Sharing/Screen Time (Apple). All games consoles also have such functions.

Step-by-step guidance for devices

* Set age-appropriate restrictions, so that NO unsuitable games or ANY social media apps can be accessed by children. (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. are all 13+)

* Set web browsers - such as Chrome, Safari or Edge - to allow NO websites except for those that you approve for access.



Understand

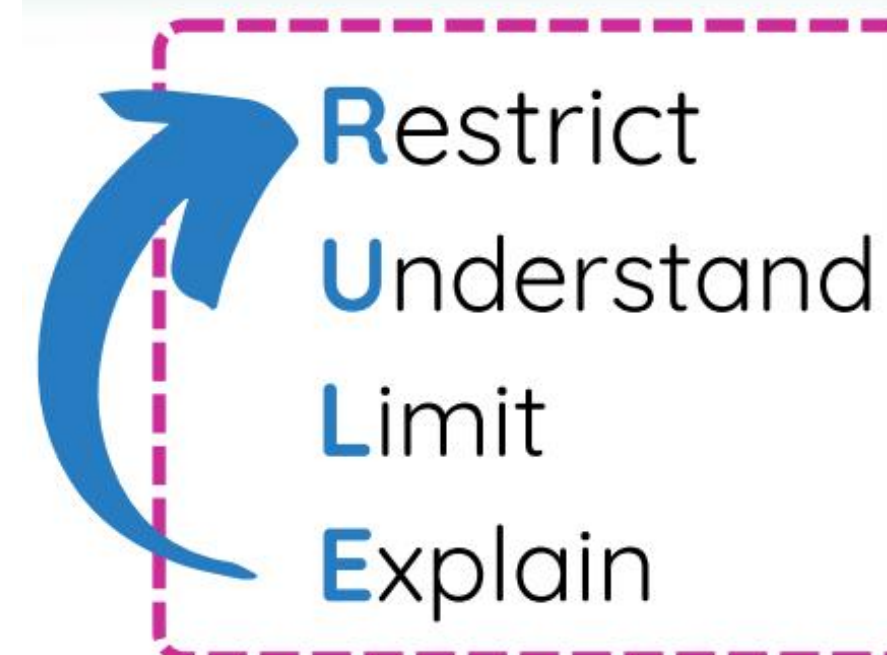
* Follow age-restrictions and enable parent supervised settings on games.
* Stay aware of the dangers surrounding technologies that children may become interested in as they grow older. Follow guidance on [Aspire's Online Safety page](#).

Limit

* Make space for activities away from tech - especially separate screens - to help provide a healthy, active, sociable balance.
* In later years, consider alternatives to 'smartphones' until children are older.

Explain

* Keep conversations with children open and regular.
* Maintain support, while letting children become competent users of technology at an appropriate pace.



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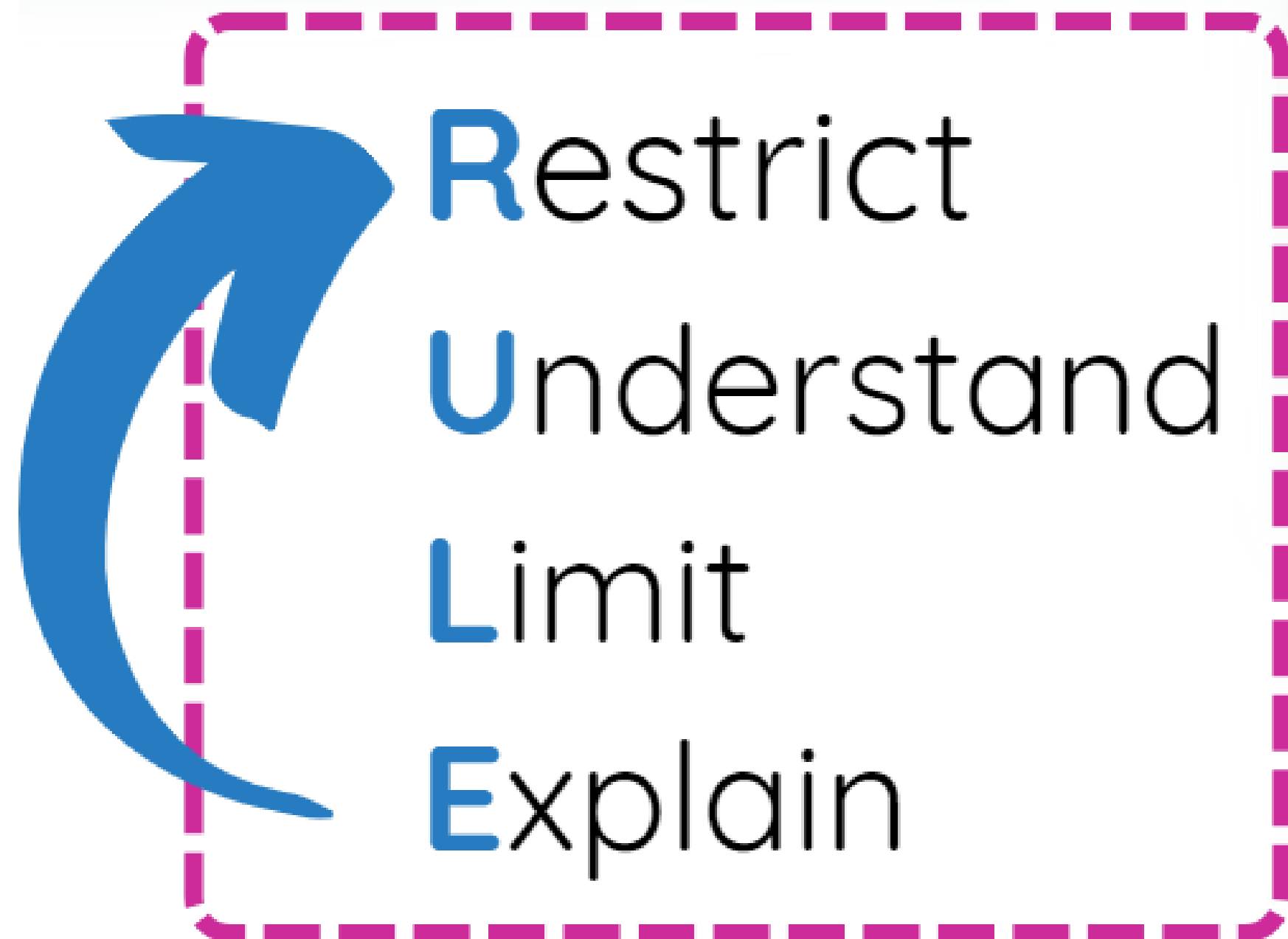
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Points in detail

* **Restrict**



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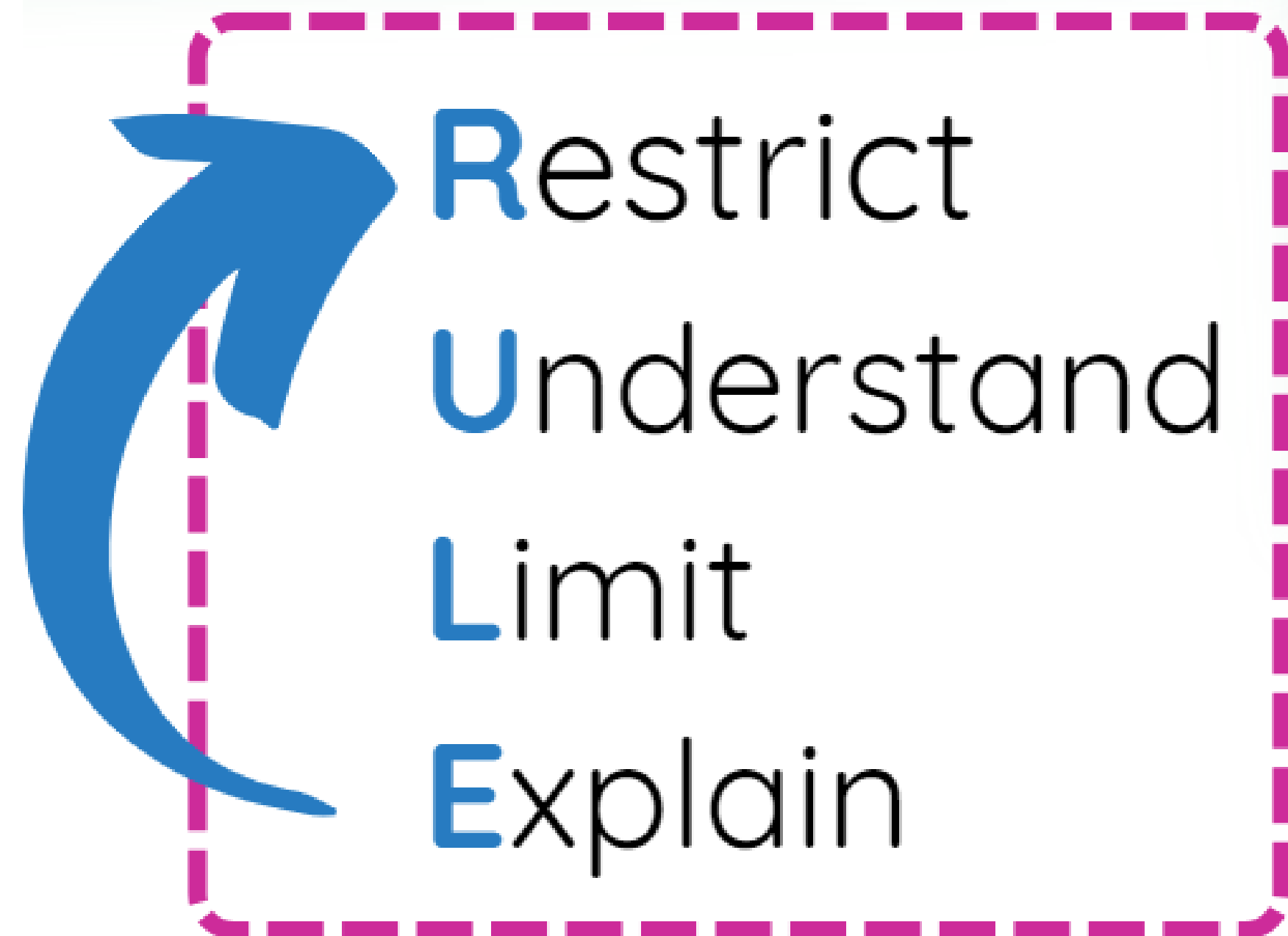
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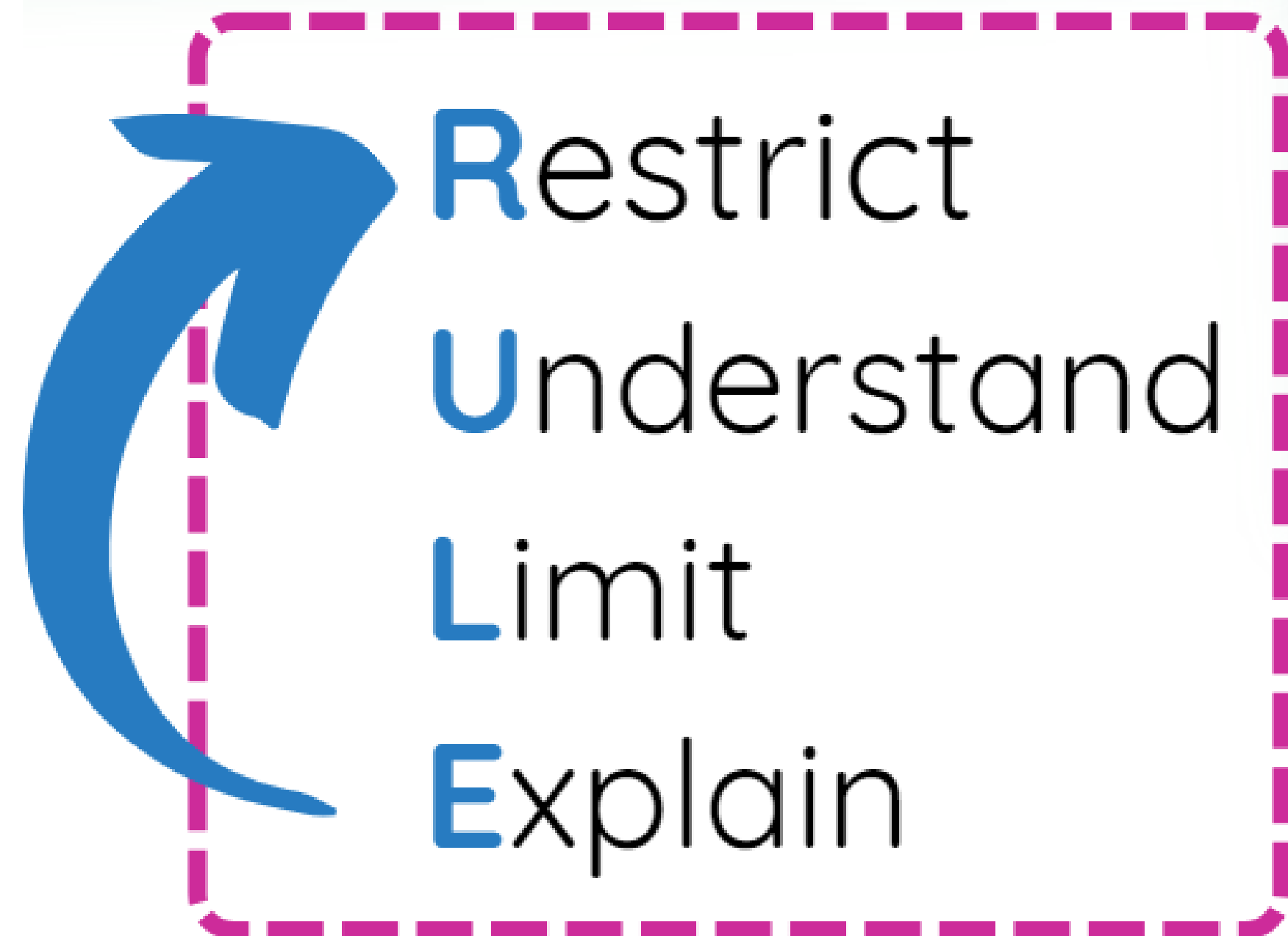


Understand

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Points in detail

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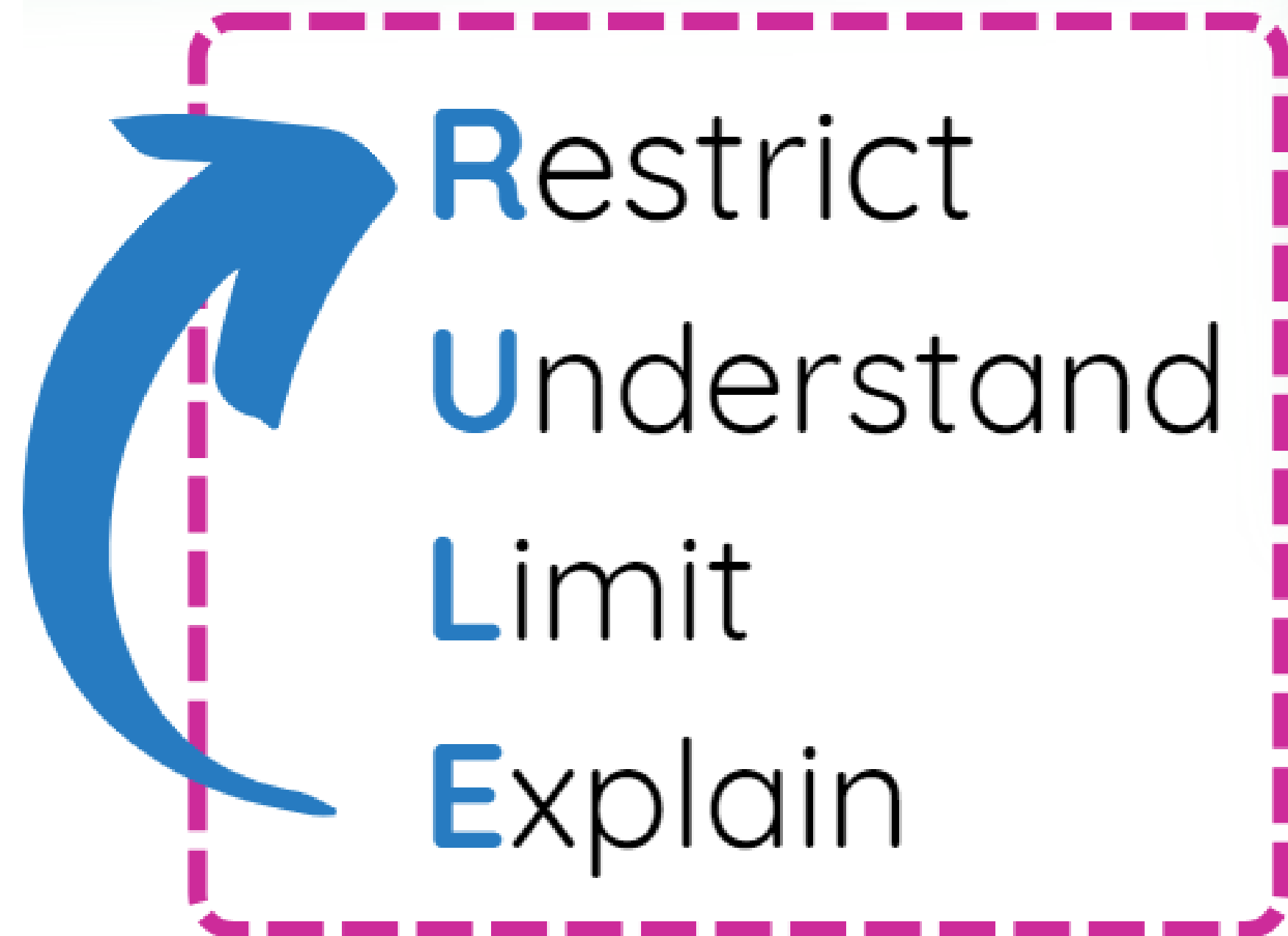


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- * **Make space for activities away from tech**
 - especially separate screens - to help provide a healthy, active, sociable balance.
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Resourcing for schools

- * Online Safety (and wider Digital Literacy) sits between Computing and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education). Many schools find that additional lessons supplement their existing PSHE structure.**
- * Schools understand that this curriculum area needs coverage, ideally with content every half term. It is an ever-expanding and ever-present aspect of DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education document.**
- * Curriculum review (2025) has just highlighted need to shift to misinformation and AI awareness.**



Independent guidance | consultation | training
Helping busy schools make informed EdTech choices

Additional Sessions

Digital Literacy: Internet Safety

Digital Literacy: Typing Club

READ FIRST

Download Unit

READ FIRST Microbits



Independent guidance | consultation | training
Helping busy schools make informed EdTech choices



DIGITAL LITERACY: YEAR 5

CURRICULUM MILESTONES

Self-image and Identity:
I can explain how identity online can be copied, modified or altered.

Online relationships:
I can explain how impulsive and rash communications online may cause problems (e.g. flaming, content produced in live streaming).

Online reputation:
I can describe ways that information about people online can be used by others to make judgments about an individual.

Online bullying:
I can explain how I would report online bullying on the apps and platforms that I use.

Managing online information:
I can explain why lots of people sharing the same opinions or beliefs online does not make those opinions or beliefs true.

Health, well-being and lifestyle:
I can describe common systems that regulate age-related content (e.g. PEGI, BBFC, parental warnings) and describe

AVAILABLE TEACHING RESOURCES
Play Like Share: animated series and resources. A fairly recent, high quality addition to the CEOP materials, [this selection of 3 cartoon-like animations](#) has accompanying resources that can be [downloaded](#) once you are registered with CEOP.

Presenting materials to children at a point in the day when there is enough time to consider comments and questions is the best way to plan for careful use of e-safety materials. [Childnet lesson on online bullying here](#) – useful as a follow-up if this aspect becomes an issue within a cohort of children.

You will find extensive resources for year 5 and 6 in the Digital Matters freely accessible section from Internet Matters. For all further info and sign up, [click here](#).

Project Evolve from SWGFL contains a huge toolkit of teaching resources that refer directly to the 8 strands and key assessment criteria (shown in blue on the left). [Register here](#).

An outline of applicable lessons, covering all of the curriculum milestones on the left, which combines options from Digital Matters and Project evolve, [can be found here](#).

ASSESS CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE AND TARGET GAPS



PROJECT
EVOLVE
Knowledge Map
Map Student Understanding & Plan
Lessons

[Project Evolve](#) also contains a Knowledge Map section whereby teachers can **quickly create a question structure** related to the 8 strands (shown in blue on the left).

Such question sets can be set up as an independent task for children, or as a 'guided' task that can be completed and discussed

Family Link – Google Devices / Android Phones / Chromebooks

*** Family Link app can be run across platforms, i.e. Family Link app on an Apple phone can control a child's Chromebook access Explain**



Help keep your family safer online

Family Link provides tools that respect families' individual choices with technology, helping them create healthy, positive digital habits. With easy-to-use tools, you can understand how your child is spending time on their device, share location, manage privacy settings, and find the right balance for your family.*

Screen Time / Family Sharing

*** Apple devices can be managed with Screen Time and / or Family Sharing.**

Set up Screen Time

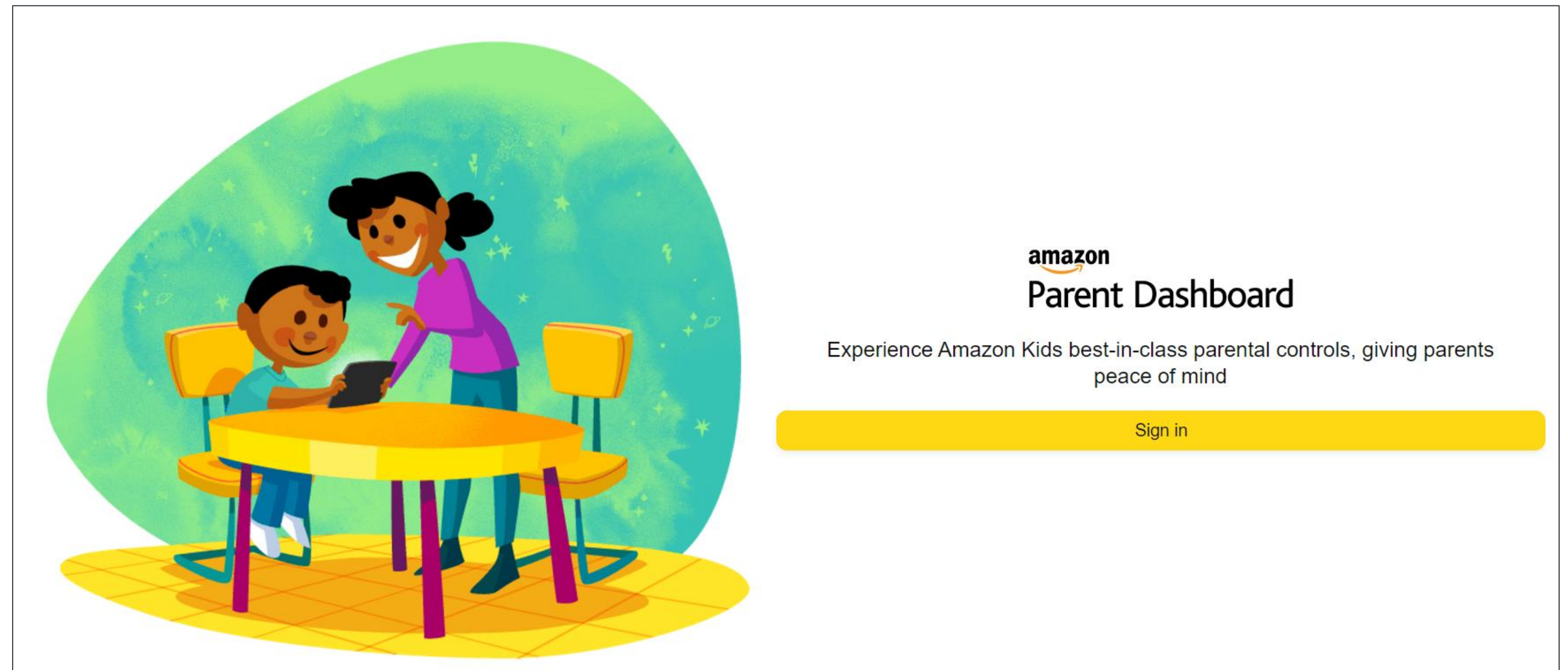
When you turn on App & Website Activity, you can view a report showing how you and your family use your devices, apps and websites. This report can also help you use and manage the settings and parental controls within Screen Time.



Family Sharing.
Share your favourite things
with your favourite people.

Amazon Devices

- * Remote Activity Reporting
- * Time Limits
- * Age filters



Microsoft Devices

- * **Family Safety** allows for devices to be monitored and limits set.
- * Be aware that apps such as web browsers, i.e. Chrome, may need separate content limits placed on them as well – or just blocked.

Microsoft Family Safety

Create a safe and healthy environment for your family with digital content filtering and screen time limits.

[Sign in](#)



Nintendo Switch

- * Can be set up to run from an adult's phone
- * Set daily time limits for different days of the week

NINTENDO SWITCH PARENTAL CONTROLS

App update: see what's new



NINTENDO SWITCH Parental Controls



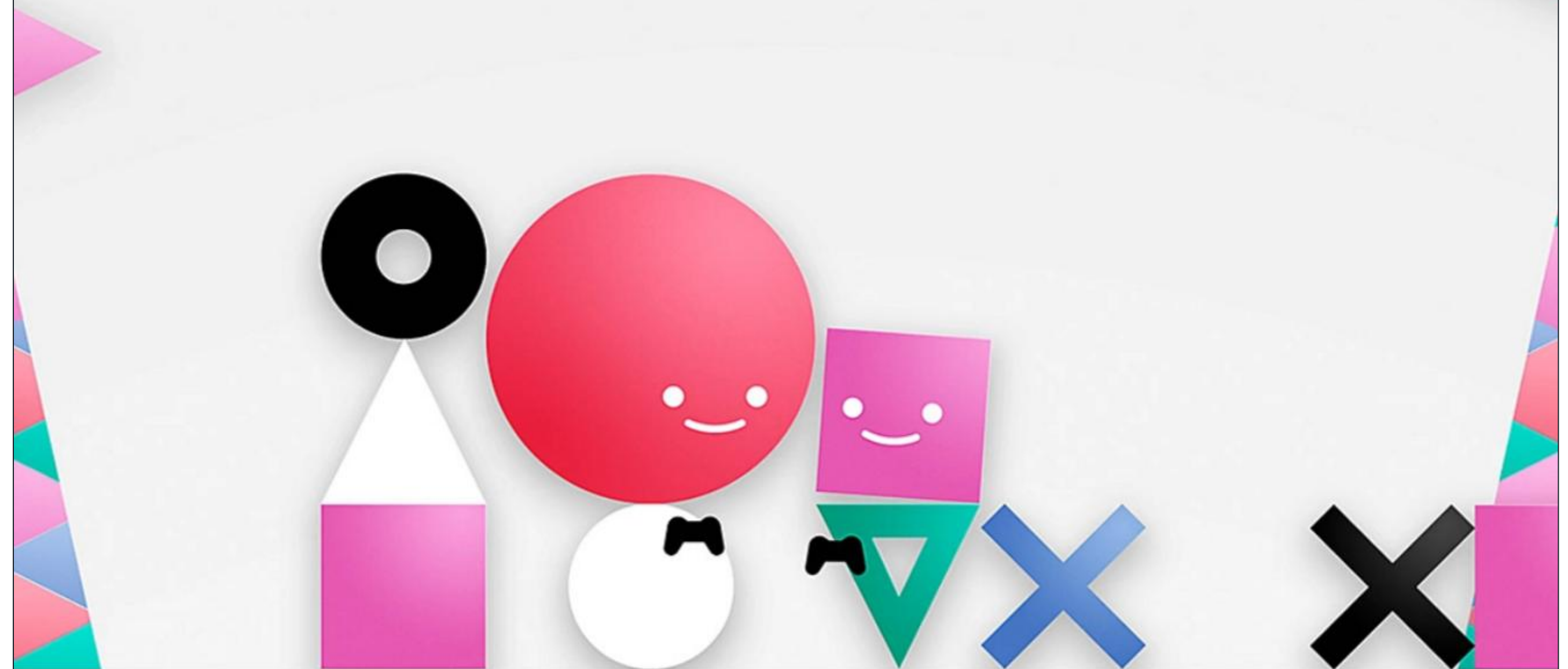
Supporting a safe and fun environment for your child's gaming experience

Sony Playstation

- * **Controls to limit content and playing times**
- * **Controls can be accessed via the web**

Parental controls on PlayStation

How you can make PlayStation a safer place to play for the whole family.



Safer play for gamers of all ages

It's easy for parents or guardians to help create a safer, age-appropriate, and fun gaming experience for every family member, using the flexible parental controls on PS4, PS5, [PlayStation App](#) or via the web on your PC and smartphone.

Further Help

- * Further source of advice and guidance is always available on the **Aspire Online Safety** page.
- * This provides further up-to-date information, plus bookings/recordings for webinar safety sessions.



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Pupil Premium

Health and Wellbeing

School Admissions

[Online Safety](#)

Arbor Parent App



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Online Safety

Aspire Academy Trust recognises that online safety is a far-reaching subject that continues to receive significant media attention and public concern.

While the UK Online Safety Act should mean that technology companies become more accountable over coming years, many adults are of the opinion that children remain too easily exposed to harmful content - and contact - through access to unrestricted online systems.

OFCOM's statutory guidance for companies will start to make an impact from 2025, though many feel these rules do not go far enough, and the Online Safety Act itself may need to be strengthened further.

FAMILIES & SCHOOLS: COLLECTIVE ACTION

TOGETHER, LET'S PROTECT CHILDHOODS FROM UNSUITABLE TECHNOLOGIES

Restrict

- * Keep devices out of private spaces such as bedrooms. Only using devices in shared home areas is the best physical way to stay aware of your child's screen-based choices and activity.
- * ALWAYS restrict and time-limit devices with the free tools supplied by major tech providers. e.g. Family Link (Google); Parent Dashboard (Amazon); Family Sharing/Screen Time (Apple). All games consoles also have such functions. [Step-by-step guidance for devices](#)
- * Set age-appropriate restrictions, so that NO unsuitable games or ANY social media apps can be accessed by children. (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. are all 13+)
- * Set web browsers - such as Chrome, Safari or Edge - to allow NO websites except for those that you approve for access.

Understand

- * Follow age-restrictions and enable parent supervised settings on games.
- * Stay aware of the dangers surrounding technologies that children may become interested in as they grow older. Follow guidance on [Aspire's Online Safety page](#).

Limit

- * Make space for activities away from tech - especially separate screens - to help provide a healthy, active, sociable balance.
- * In later years, consider alternatives to 'smartphones' until children are older.

Explain

- * Keep conversations with children open and regular.
- * Maintain support, while letting children become competent users of technology at an appropriate pace.





