

Creating a family tech agreement for 9- to 12-year-olds

Supporting growing independence

Children aged 9 to 12 are typically navigating the digital world more independently than younger children. This is an important time to build their knowledge and confidence about staying safe online.

Start the conversation

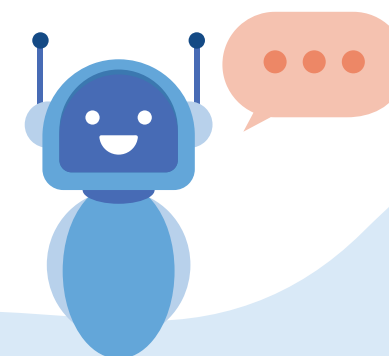
By talking with your child regularly about online safety, you're laying the foundation for lifelong skills. Use this resource and template to guide open conversations about important online safety topics and agree on what works best for your family.

It's never too late to start. Tailor the conversation to your child, ask questions to check what they already understand, and find common ground to build on together. You can check our [tips for creating a tech agreement](#) for more advice.



Creating healthy habits with devices	Example agreements
Stay connected by using devices in shared spaces Talk with your child about using devices in shared areas like the lounge room. This helps you stay involved in their online activities, promotes regular check-ins, and encourages them to ask for help when they need it. Set clear, shared expectations Agree together on how to look after devices, when they can be used and when it's time to switch off. For example, you can build healthy routines for the whole family by choosing a common place for everyone to leave their devices before bedtime. Decide when your child is ready to use online devices To help you make an informed decision about whether it's the right time to let your child have access to devices, or give them their own device, explore Are they old enough?	As a family: We'll agree not to use our devices during mealtimes and switch them off one hour before bedtime. For a younger child: I'll agree to only use devices in shared areas of the home, not in my bedroom. For an older child: I'll switch any devices off at the times we agree together, even if I'm very involved in an online activity.
Protecting personal information	Example agreements
Talk about sharing personal information Help your child understand why it's important to protect their online identity. Discuss details like keeping their full name, birthday, address and passwords private. Explain how this information can sometimes be shared by accident – through smart toys, speakers like Alexa, Google Assistant or Siri, or in the background of photos. Be open about location sharing If you choose to use location-sharing features within your family, talk with your child about how a location can be personal information. For example, it can show where you live. Discuss why locations should be only shared with people you trust. Use tools to support privacy You may set up parental controls, but it's best to take other steps too, such as making sure privacy and location settings are at age-appropriate levels – The eSafety Guide links to the steps on common apps, games and websites. Talk with your child about how these features help to keep them safe. As your child grows and builds digital skills, revisit privacy settings together and encourage questions to build trust and shared responsibility.	As a family: We'll keep talking about parental controls and when we may need to change them together. For a younger child: I'll only share my location with my trusted family members. For an older child: I'll talk with you about any accounts I create for apps and games so we can make sure my personal information is secure.

Choosing content that's right for your child's age	Example agreements
Explore what your child enjoys online Talk with your child about the games, apps, websites and videos they like. Watching and playing together helps you understand their online interests and build a stronger connection with them. It also puts you in a better position to guide them and have informed conversations about what's right for their age and stage of development. Talk about boundaries If your child is curious about games, videos, social media apps, or AI chatbots or companions that are not suitable, take time to understand what interests them and agree on safer alternatives. Some platforms have minimum age requirements – talk about why these are in place and how they support their safety and wellbeing. You can refer to eSafety's advice on gaming online, social media age restrictions, and AI chatbots and companions. Encourage help seeking if something doesn't feel right Remind your child they can come to you for help if they come across content that makes them feel uncomfortable, upset or unsafe. Disturbing content could include violent material like fight videos or gore, or online porn. Reassure them they won't get into trouble or lose access to being online – this helps build trust and encourages them to ask for help when they need it. Support your child to decide which trusted adults or support services they can turn to and when, and add names and numbers under 'My safety network' in the template.	As a family: We'll learn more about games and apps before we download or purchase them, to make sure they're safe for us to play or use. For a younger child: I'll talk with you or another adult I trust about anything I see online that makes me feel uncomfortable, upset or unsafe. For an older child: I'll talk with you or another adult I trust if I see harmful or disturbing content online, even if it's something a friend shared.



Showing respect	Example agreements
Talk about respect and kindness in digital spaces Help your child understand that being respectful online is just as important as offline. Talk about what it means to be a good digital citizen and a good friend – someone who treats others with respect, asks for consent and thinks before they post or share online. You can model behaviours that teach them about consent and respect in many situations. Practise respectful ways to say ‘no’ Help your child learn how to respond when they’re asked to do or watch something that makes them uncomfortable. Practise role-playing scenarios where they might use phrases like: ‘No, thank you, I don’t want to watch that’, ‘Please respect my choice’, or ‘My family has rules about that game – I’m not allowed to play it’. This helps build confidence and skills in being assertive in a respectful way. Be there when they need help Let your child know they can come to you for help if someone has been disrespectful to them online or if they think they may have upset someone else. For example, talk about what to do if they are bullied, or they see someone else being bullied online, and reassure them that asking for help is always the right thing to do. You can also explore our Cyberbullying page for advice for parents about online bullying.	As a family: We’ll ask for consent before taking or posting a photo or video of each other online.
	For a younger child: I’ll speak up in a respectful way and say ‘no’ if I don’t want to do or watch something online.
	For an older child: I’ll be kind and respectful to others online – and help someone if I see them being bullied online and I feel safe to do so.



Balancing time	Example agreements
Focus on what your child is doing – not just how long Think about the quality of what your child is doing online – not just how long they spend on screens. Creative, entertaining and educational content – like games, music or dance videos – can support learning and relaxation and even inspire offline play. Consider your family’s values and routines when deciding what works best. Think about the bigger picture When deciding how much time online is too much, think about how it affects your child’s overall health and wellbeing – including sleep, mood, physical activity and time spent with others. Read Screen time for more detailed advice. Talk about balance and make a plan together Ask your child what they enjoy online and offline – like reading, playing sport or joining club activities. Talk about why balance matters and agree on ways to manage screen time, such as setting time limits or using a timer for games. Help your child notice signs it’s time to take a break, like feeling tired, frustrated or getting angry if interrupted.	As a family: We’ll talk about what our family likes watching and doing together online and offline, and why.
	For a younger child: I’ll talk with my family about what I’m doing online and keep to time limits we agree together.
	For an older child: I’ll look for signs that I’m spending too much time online – like sore eyes, or feeling annoyed, angry or upset if I’m interrupted – and take a break.



Spotting warning signs	Example agreements
Talk about what to watch out for online Help your child understand that not everyone online is who they say they are, and that messages or friend requests from people they don't know – for example, in games or chats – may be a 'red flag'. This includes being asked to move to another platform or to keep a secret, giving them compliments about their looks, promising gifts, or requests to meet up in person. Direct conversations about these warning signs are key to helping your child recognise and respond to risks. Explain how people might try to trick others online Talk with your child about common tactics that may be used to gain their trust, like someone posting fake profile photos, pretending to be the same age, share similar interests, or be friends with people they know. These tactics are often used before the person asks the child to share something or to meet up in real life. Helping your children spot these behaviours online builds their skills and ability to make safe choices. Encourage your child to speak up Keep communication open and calm so your child knows they can always come to you or another adult in their safety network if something doesn't feel right, even if they think they've made a mistake. Remind them that asking for help is the right thing to do, listen without judgement and reassure them that they won't get into trouble. You can also read more advice for parents about unwanted contact and child grooming.	As a family: We'll keep talking together about who you're connecting with online so we can make sure you stay safe. For a younger child: I'll let you know if someone tries to contact me and I don't know them. For an older child: I won't accept friend requests or chats online from people I don't know and I'm not sure about, and I'll make sure I ask for help from an adult I trust.



Thinking critically	Example agreements
Help your child to ask questions about what they see online Thinking critically is a skill your child can build from a young age and use throughout their life. Explain that images, videos, or messages can be edited or made to look real when they're not, and talk about how to question what they see, hear and do online. Explore answers together and talk about how to spot trustworthy sources versus scams, 'fake' news, or deepfake AI-generated content. You can read more about this in Fake news and misinformation.	As a family: We'll talk about things we see online that we think might not be true and work together to find sources of information we trust.
Talk about influencers and online content creators If your child is curious about influencers or content creators, help them think about why people may post content. Talk about things like earning money from likes and views and paid promotions. This helps your child understand that not everything shared online is just for fun – it can be part of a business to make money and may not be safe.	For a younger child: I'll talk with you if I see something online and I'm unsure whether I should believe it or not.
Discuss in-app purchases and game design If your child plays games or uses apps that ask for money to unlock rewards or keep playing, talk about why these features exist. Explain that game companies often design these tools to keep people playing for too long and spending money. You can also choose to use parental controls to manage in-app purchases, and help your child understand how to make thoughtful choices online.	For an older child: I'll ask a trusted adult for advice when looking for information about something important to me, so we can find reliable sources together.



Our family tech agreement

You can fill out this template based on what you and your child have agreed, and display it as a visual reminder for your family.

We agree together



Creating healthy habits with devices



Protecting personal information



Choosing content for my age



Showing respect



Balancing time



Spotting warning signs



Thinking critically

My safety network

If I need help, I can talk with these adults I trust:

Name

Phone

Name

Phone

Name

Phone

Name

Phone

Name

Phone

You can also contact

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800,
or chat online at
[kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

000: In emergencies, call police on 000

Report: Report harmful content to the platform, or
[eSafety.gov.au/report](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report) if they don't help you.

