

HOW TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S DEVICE

Ensuring your child's device is safe is a key part of protecting them online. At Swans, we advise parents to regularly check their child's device to prevent exposure to inappropriate content and unwanted interactions. Here's a guide to help you review their device and maintain a safe online environment:

1. Review Installed Apps and Games

- Go through the list of installed apps and games to ensure they are age-appropriate and safe. Look for apps that might not be suitable for their age, even if they seem popular.
- Check app permissions to see what information apps are accessing, such as location, contacts, or the camera.
- Remove unnecessary or suspicious apps, especially those with chat features where strangers could communicate with them.

2. Delete VPNs That Bypass School Security

- Look for VPN (Virtual Private Network) apps on your child's device. VPNs can be used to bypass school security firewalls, allowing access to restricted content. Our students are aware that these are strictly prohibited on devices which are used in school.
- VPNs often have names like Turbo VPN, Hotspot Shield, or ExpressVPN—delete any that you find.
- Talk to your child about the importance of following school internet safety guidelines and why it's essential to respect firewall protections designed to keep them safe.

3. Enable Parental Controls

- Set up parental controls on the device to limit access to certain apps, websites, and content.
- For Apple devices: Go to Settings > Screen Time > Content & Privacy Restrictions to block certain apps and content.
- For Android devices: Use the Google Family Link app to manage what your child can access.
- Restrict app downloads and prevent purchases without your approval by setting up password protection for app stores.

4. Monitor Browsing History

- Review the browser history to see what websites your child has visited. Look for any inappropriate or suspicious sites.
- In Safari or Chrome, access the browser's history via the settings menu.
- Discuss the importance of safe browsing, and if the history is being frequently cleared, have a conversation about the importance of transparency.

5. Check Social Media and Chat Apps

- Look at their social media profiles and check privacy settings to ensure their accounts are private and they're only interacting with known people.
- Review messages in chat apps to ensure they are not communicating with strangers or sharing personal information.
- Limit or disable chat features in games or apps where there's no need to interact with strangers.

6. Use Monitoring Tools

- Use parental monitoring tools to keep track of their online activity. Popular options include:
- Google Family Link (for Android devices)
- Apple Screen Time (for iOS devices)
- These tools allow you to monitor app usage, screen time, and any inappropriate behaviour.

7. Check Screen Time Usage

- Review the amount of time your child spends online, ensuring it's balanced with offline activities.
- On iPhones and iPads, go to Settings > Screen Time > See All Activity to view a breakdown of app usage.
- On Android devices, visit Settings > Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls to view and manage screen time.
- Set limits on screen time to encourage healthy habits, especially during school days and at night.

8. Keep Software Updated

- Update apps and the device's operating system regularly to ensure the latest security patches and improvements are installed.
- Turn on automatic updates for all apps and the operating system to avoid outdated and vulnerable software.

9. Encourage Open Conversations

- Talk to your child regularly about what they do online, the apps they use, and any new games or websites they've discovered.
- Discuss the importance of online safety—make sure they understand not to share personal details or interact with strangers online.
- Reinforce that they can always come to you if they encounter anything uncomfortable or confusing online.

10. Monitor Downloads and App Store Activity

- Check for recent downloads in the app store to see what new apps or games have been installed.
- Restrict purchases or downloads without your approval by enabling password or fingerprint authentication for app store purchases.

Regular Device Checks Keep Your Child Safe

By consistently checking your child's device, deleting VPNs, and monitoring their online activity, you help ensure they are using technology safely and responsibly. Maintaining an open, supportive dialogue with your child about their internet use will also foster trust and help them feel comfortable coming to you with any concerns.