

## Keeping Your Child Safe on iMessage

### A Guide for Primary School Parents

#### What Is iMessage?

iMessage is Apple's built-in messaging app, allowing users to send text messages, images, videos, and more.



**⚠️ Minimum Age:** The suggested minimum age for using iMessage is **13**. This is based on privacy and safety guidelines. However, we know younger children may use it under adult supervision.

#### Why Safety Matters

While iMessage can be a fun way to connect, children may face:

- Inappropriate content
- Contact from strangers
- Cyberbullying
- Pressure to overshare

This guide helps you support your child in using iMessage safely.

#### 🗨️ 1. Talk Openly with Your Child

- **Start Early:** Talk about what is okay to send and receive—no personal info, photos, or messages from people they don't know.
- **Build Trust:** Make sure your child knows they can come to you if something online feels wrong or upsetting.
- **Stay Curious:** Ask questions about who they're chatting with and how it makes them feel.

#### 🎯 2. Set Clear Guidelines

- **When & Where:** Limit iMessage use to certain times and places (e.g., not at bedtime or during meals).
- **Who They Can Chat With:** Stick to real-life friends and family. Help them block or ignore unknown contacts.
- **Tailor to Age:** Younger children need closer supervision. Adjust rules as they grow and learn.

#### 🔒 3. Use Parental Controls

On Apple Devices:

- Use **Family Sharing** to manage their contacts and screen time.
- Turn on **Screen Time settings** to:
  - Limit messaging hours
  - Restrict explicit content
  - Monitor usage

#### Additional Safety Tools:

- Consider trusted apps to monitor or filter online activity.
- Choose tools that match your values and respect privacy.

#### 4. Use Trusted Online Resources

- NSPCC: [nspcc.org.uk/online-safety](https://nspcc.org.uk/online-safety)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [saferinternet.org.uk](https://saferinternet.org.uk)
- No Limits: [nolimitshelp.org.uk](https://nolimitshelp.org.uk)

These organisations offer practical advice for parents on messaging safety and more.

#### 5. Be Ready in Case of Problems

Make sure your child knows:


- How to **block** and **report** people
- How to **save messages** or **take screenshots**
- That they can speak to you or a trusted adult

Need help? Call **Childline on 0800 1111**

Free, confidential support for children and young people.

#### Final Tips for Parents

- Check if iMessage is the right platform for your child's age.
- Keep digital devices in shared family spaces.
- Review privacy settings together.
- Celebrate your child's responsible choices online!

 By staying involved, setting boundaries, and having regular conversations, you'll help your child stay safe while learning to use messaging apps like iMessage with confidence.

