Standing Up, Standing Out...On Line

The internet is an amazing place to be creative, chat with friends, and find interesting fun stuff.
You may spend a lot of time online, so it’s important to enjoy that time, and to be safe and happy.

Online friendships

Try to think of your online world as an extension of your offline friendships. Include friends in your activities. It can feel just as hurtful to be left out of online games or chat as offline ones. Be careful how you word things, as sometimes the written word can be misinterpreted. Consider whether important conversations, like resolving conflicts, might be better done face to face.

Be respectful

Respect your friends on social media. Don't post photos of them that they might find embarrassing without asking first – and take them down straight away if someone asks you to. Try to be mindful of how your posts will make people feel before you put them up. You'll care about what other people post about you – so be courteous to others too.

Be aware of your digital footprint
Every time you go online you leave a digital 'footprint' which shows others where you are and what you have been doing. While posting pictures and videos is great for sharing with friends and being creative, always remember that once an image or file is online it’s likely to stay there forever. Don’t post anything you wouldn’t want your grandma to see.

Think before you post

Social media and some websites can be great for airing your opinions. However, you risk saying or writing things on the spur of the moment that you may later regret. Try to put your point across in a positive or neutral way. It will have more impact and shouldn't cause offence. When you respond to something someone has said, remember there's a person at the other end who has feelings, just like you do.

Know who you're dealing with

Lots of people only play or chat with people they know in person, and that's a sensible approach. But if you do meet people you don't know, use the same caution that you would offline. People may not be who they say they are, so be mindful about what you say about yourself. Keep chat general and if you are concerned that someone's asking for personal details, stop contact and tell a trusted adult. Never arrange to meet someone you only know online.

Protect your identity

When using the internet never give out personal information, such as your number, where you live or what school you go to – it's a big no-no. If you are using social media check your privacy settings and make sure only friends can see your posts.

It's not always real life

Photos and posts can exaggerate real life. Think about it - we usually select our prettiest, happiest pictures (you rarely see posts about going to the supermarket with your mum, or photos of a massive spot). Images of other people's (carefully chosen) perfect lives can leave you feeling low, but they rarely tell the whole story.

Keep a healthy balance

The internet is a fantastic resource for playing, sharing, and learning. But if you find yourself spending a lot of time online, or thinking about it when you could be doing fun 'real world' things, maybe it’s time to back off a bit. There’s a whole world out there. It’s about striking a balance.