

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will be aware the internet hosts many exciting opportunities for education. The online world is a wonderful place for young people to explore, with unprecedented opportunities for learning and creativity, but just like the real world there are risks and dangers they should be aware of and which we should all act to protect them from. Schools encourage the use of technology as an important part of our students' development but always want them to spend their time online safely. As a parent/carer you can play a significant part in ensuring this.

By getting involved and taking an interest you can help keep your children safe and help them to learn what to do if they feel uncomfortable about anything they encounter while using technology and the internet.

If you wish to limit access to any inappropriate content online, please ensure that computers, laptops and other devices with internet access are all fitted with parental controls

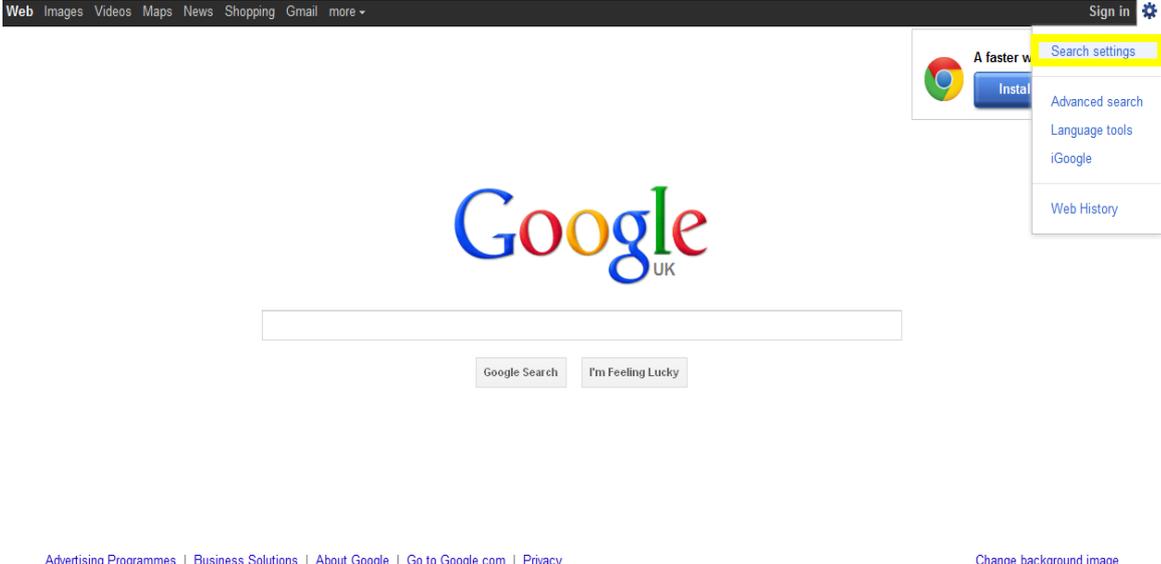
You can find free downloadable versions online or you can contact your internet service provider (such as BT, Talk Talk, Sky) for more information.

As a **minimum**, please consider setting parental controls on your search engines, youtube account and the mobile phone your child uses.

One of the most popular search engines in the world is Google. You can visit Google's informative safety centre for **simple** step by step guides - <http://www.google.com/goodtoknow/familysafety/>

Here are a few options available to you; they truly are simple to set.

Visit the Google home page – [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) and click on the 'search setting' tab in the top right hand corner.



The screenshot shows the Google UK homepage. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Web', 'Images', 'Videos', 'Maps', 'News', 'Shopping', 'Gmail', and 'more'. On the right side, there is a 'Sign in' button and a gear icon for settings. The settings menu is open, showing options: 'Search settings' (highlighted in yellow), 'Advanced search', 'Language tools', 'iGoogle', and 'Web History'. Below the navigation is the Google logo with 'UK' underneath. A search bar is present, with 'Google Search' and 'I'm Feeling Lucky' buttons below it. At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'Advertising Programmes', 'Business Solutions', 'About Google', 'Go to Google.com', 'Privacy', and 'Change background image'.

Scroll down the page and change the filtering options to suit your family's needs. Make sure you lock the safe search; otherwise these settings can easily be changed without your knowledge.

## SafeSearch Filtering

Google's SafeSearch blocks web pages containing explicit sexual content from appearing in search results.

- Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images)
- Use moderate filtering (Filter explicit images only - default behavior)
- Do not filter my search results

[Lock SafeSearch](#) This will apply strict filtering to all searches from this computer using Internet Explorer. [Learn more](#)

You can also set this on your child's smart phone;

### SafeSearch on your phone

SafeSearch is accessible on your mobile device by using the browser to access the Google homepage. Choose settings located at the bottom of the screen and you'll see the option to select Strict, Moderate or to turn SafeSearch off completely.



**BUT...** Please be aware that no filter is 100% accurate. We advise that you talk to your child about the sites they use. Why don't you discuss:

- their favourite online sites
- what they enjoy most, the fun aspects of being online
- what they think can go wrong
- how would they react if things got out of control

Let them know that you understand that things can go wrong and make sure they know that you are there to help.

Make yourself aware not just of the risks but also of the people (e.g. the school's Designated Safeguarding Person) and tools available to you for support and guidance.

Some useful websites:

- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#)
- [Thinkuknow.co.uk](#)
- [CyberMentors.org.uk](#)
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- [GetSafeOnline.org](#)
- <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls>

Kind Regards

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ICT Adviser, Essex County Council  
[www.e-ictsupport.org.uk](http://www.e-ictsupport.org.uk)