

**PARENTS  
AS PARTNERS**

NEXT  
GENERATION  
LEARNING

**Becta** leading  
next generation  
learning

Parents

November 2009



# Supporting your child's learning

Discover how technology helps parents, schools  
and pupils work together

Children are likely to be more comfortable with technology than most adults are.



# Next Generation Learning

Next Generation Learning is a government campaign to make the most of technology for teaching and learning:

- across the school
- in the classroom
- at home.

The daily use of technology is second nature to many children, especially teenagers. Think how simple they make text messaging look. Games consoles are literally child's play for them.

In class, children love to come up to use the interactive whiteboard.

Technology is increasingly important in education. ICT (information and communications technology) is taught as part of the national curriculum and across different subjects. It also supports other areas of school life, including communications with parents.

Research shows that children do better in their studies when:

- they use technology at school and at home, and
- parents work as partners with the school.



## WHAT'S INSIDE

In this booklet we show you how technology can help you keep in touch with your child's school.

And most importantly, how this will help you to support your child's learning.



[www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk)

48%

of parents said you'd like to understand different ways to use technology\*

88%

of parents have found technology helpful for getting involved in your child's education\*

\* Schools and Parents: The New Partnership, Beta 2009  
[www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/schoolsandparents](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/schoolsandparents)

# What parents want from schools

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Most parents say that you want to get more involved in your child's education. But to do so, you need more information from your child's school.

73%

of you think it's important to help your child with homework\*

80%

of you find the idea of secure online access appealing\*

82%

of you want more from your child's school website\*

## *Research has found that:*

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6 out of 10 parents feel involved in their child's school life at primary school. This drops to 4 in 10 at secondary level.

More than 80% of you say you'd like advice on communicating with teachers.

In turn, 70% of teachers want contact with you more than once a term.

## In touch with school

The way schools and parents work together is changing.

You say you want more information from schools on:

- what your child is learning
- how they are being taught
- how you can support their learning.



Read on to find out more about how technology can enable schools to share more information more regularly with you.

It's now much easier for schools to keep you up-to-date with important information about your child, their studies and the school.



### *Traditional communications...*

- Pupils brought a letter home for you in their school bag.
- You found out at parents' evening about your child's attendance record.
- You learnt about achievement from the annual report.

### *Next Generation Learning...*

- The school emails you directly with important news.
- You get a text when your child achieves something really good at school.
- You regularly follow your child's progress online.

# What you could expect

Schools are using all sorts of technology to communicate with parents.

Different schools use different tools, depending on what works best for them and their parents. For example:



Park Lane Primary School in Cambridgeshire produces podcasts. Parents listen in and find out what their child has been doing in class.



Monkseaton High School in North Tyneside encourages parents to email teachers and learn about their child's achievements.



Pupils at Woodlawn Special School in Northumberland take home communication devices programmed with information about things they've done that day.



The Radclyffe School in Oldham gives parents online access to information about their child. This covers academic progress, behaviour, attendance, punctuality and any special educational needs.



Broadgreen International School in Liverpool hosts regular ICT training sessions for parents.



To find out how other schools are using technology to help parents support their child's learning, visit:

 [www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/parentsaspartners](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/parentsaspartners)

Anson Primary School in Brent uses its secure website to keep parents in touch during school trips. Teachers and children post updates, photos and movie clips.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

If you'd like to use technology to keep on track with your child's education, here are some questions to ask the school:

How do you plan to use technology to communicate with parents?

How will you actually do this?

Do you need parents to help you pilot such schemes?

Will you give us any training?

**FOR MORE IDEAS, VISIT:**

 [www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/talktoschool](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/talktoschool)

# Getting more involved

As a parent, you are a key partner in your child's learning. Getting involved in their learning is the single most positive thing you can do for your child's education.

01



Get to grips with technology

Find out more about technology. Make sure you're comfortable using a computer and browsing the internet safely. Ask your child's school about parent training sessions. Or get help from your local library, community or UK online centre.

Once you know more, you'll feel more confident helping your child. Then you can both enjoy the benefits of technology.

02



Get connected at home

A computer with internet access at home offers real advantages for children. Using a computer at home can result in a young person getting higher grades at GCSE.

With internet access and your support at home, your child can use online learning materials from school. You can also get information about your child's school, what they are learning in class and how they are progressing.

Together, you can enjoy a wide range of web-based resources and fun activities that support learning.

Next Generation Learning takes place at school, in class and at home. There's a lot you can do to make sure your child is getting the most from technology. Here's how...





**03**

### Encourage your child as much as possible

Research shows you can help your child achieve more in school by getting involved in their education at home. Here are some easy things to do:

- Discuss a wide range of topics. Research them together on the internet.
- Ask your child to present what they have found using a variety of computer programs. Maybe include pictures or even videos.
- Ask your child's school what websites it recommends for use at home.
- You can even complete exam test papers online – try working through them with your child.

**04**

### Keep in touch with school

Ask your child's teacher how they use technology in school and in the classroom. Ask how you can find out what they're learning and how they are doing. You may be able to see their classwork and homework via a secure online space.

Make sure the school has up-to-date details for you, such as your mobile phone numbers and email address. Take up any training the school offers on ICT.

Volunteer to try out any new ways the school is using to communicate with parents.

**05**

### Visit the Next Generation Learning website

There's a lot more you can do to join in with Next Generation Learning. You'll find more information, ideas and activities on the website. Be inspired by the videos and great examples of what schools are doing to help your child learn.



[www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk)

# Using the internet **safely**



## PRACTICAL HINTS AND TIPS

The Next Generation Learning website is packed with ideas for supporting your child's education and for using the internet safely and effectively.

Start by teaching your child about e-safety and behaving responsibly online. You can use the quick hints and tips that follow or download a full set of 'Here's how' activity cards from our website.

Try out the e-safety quiz and extra resources. Then have fun working through some of the online educational activities with your child.

 [www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/at-home/internet-safety](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/at-home/internet-safety)

01

## TALK TO YOUR CHILD

If you're unsure just how all this technology works, get your kids to show you! Talk to them about what they do online, why they find it so exciting and what they use it for. This is a great time to explore online with your child.

02

## START BY BEING SAFE

Talk to your child about the importance of being responsible and safe online.

- Take a look at the history button and links on your web browser. Talk to your children about what they see and do.
- Remember this is about parenting, not about knowing the ins and outs of various technologies.

Get to know the parental controls for the technology they use. Look at Ofcom's guide on how to manage your child's access to digital TV and internet content.

 [www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/guides/media/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/guides/media/)

03

## SET THE GROUND RULES

Make sure your family has some clear ground rules when using the internet. Set boundaries and time limits and encourage good behaviour online – for example:

- no cyberbullying
- no sharing of personal information
- no arranging to meet strangers.

Get some ideas from these sites:

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet)

[www.childnet-int.org/KIA/parents](http://www.childnet-int.org/KIA/parents)

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety)

04

## GUARD PRIVATE INFORMATION

Keep your family information private. Think before you share personal information online and explain why it's important to be cautious. Remember that once something goes public, it can be very difficult to undo.



05

## REPORT ABUSE

You need to be ready to act if your child feels uncomfortable with anything they experience online. Let them know they can tell you, or another trusted adult, if they are having a problem.

Ensure they know:

- how to use the 'report abuse' button on the sites they visit
- how to block unwanted messages
- what to do if they discover a site that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Report abuse via:

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

# Searching the internet

01

**GOT AN ADDRESS?  
USE IT!**

Save yourself lots of time. If you have the address of a specific site you want to visit, type it carefully into the address bar.

Your children's school may have a list of recommended sites which support what they are studying at school – just ask.

02

**CHOOSE A  
SEARCH ENGINE**

Three of the most popular are:

 [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)

 [www.yahoo.co.uk](http://www.yahoo.co.uk)

 [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

Search engines designed specifically for young children include:

 [www.askkids.com](http://www.askkids.com)

 [www.kids.yahoo.com](http://www.kids.yahoo.com)

Try searching for the same thing in different search engines and see what different results come back. Set the 'safe search' preferences to suit your child's age and level of maturity.



03

### NARROW YOUR SEARCH

Try using quotation marks to find exactly what you want. For example, type in "geography revision sites".

Use a minus sign to exclude areas. For example, search for *battleships -games*. This stops you getting results for the game called Battleships when doing a history project.

04

### CHOOSE YOUR COUNTRY

Most search engines will let you search for 'UK results only'. Click on this option if you want to cut out information from sites in other countries.

05

### KEEP A TRACK OF GOOD SITES

When you're on a site you like, you can 'bookmark' or save it as a 'favourite' so you can find it quickly again. Simply click on 'favourites' or 'bookmarks' on the menu and follow the on-screen instructions.



# Using the internet responsibly

01

## DOING HOMEWORK

Discuss why copying and pasting other people's work off the internet is:

- a) tempting
- b) wrong.

Talk about the difference between research and copying off websites.

### DO TOGETHER:

- Take a page of writing that interests you from the internet.
- Rewrite it in your own words and state where you got the information or ideas.

02

## PICTURE THIS

Ask your child to show you how to copy and paste an image from the internet to illustrate a piece of class work. Have a go yourself.

### DO TOGETHER:

- Go back to the page where you found the image.
- What does it say about using the images ('copyright')?
- If in doubt, discuss what you should do.



## DOWNLOADING AND FILE SHARING

Ask your child what they think about:

- downloading music, movies images etc
- sharing stuff with friends without paying for it.

### DO TOGETHER:

- Discuss why shoplifting or receiving stolen goods is wrong.
- Talk about how this is like illegal downloading or file sharing.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Talk to your child about the value of technology for learning.
- Talk to your school about how you can get more involved in your child's learning.
- Visit our website for helpful hints and tips about how to become a partner in your child's education.



[www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk)



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10/09-10/WR0207/TT22563/15777/100K

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