5. REDUCING THE RISK

The internet is not centrally moderated, but as a parent you can set controls on your child's internet access in the home. Parental controls packages can enable you to block access to adult websites, such as pornographic and gambling sites.

Setting age appropriate controls on the sites they use and your network can help reduce the risk, but remember no filter is 100% accurate. Support is available from the provider of your internet package, such as Sky, BT or Virgin Media. The majority of service providers now offer free parental control packages. Make sure you do the same on your child's phone and all internet enabled devices.

WEB PROTECTION
A wide open Internet is unsafe for children. Pornography and other adult content are available with ease to curious young minds, and often appear without any explicit action on the part of the child. Social media web sites can impose uncomfortable or offensive interactions with others pretending to be "friends".

One product is K9 Web Protection; it is free internet filtering and parental control software for the home. K9 gives you more control of the internet to protect your family. It blocks by category, including pornography, illegal drugs, personal/dating sites, violence/hate/racism; it can be set to disallow internet access during designated times and has presets for "always allow/block". There is a browser app available for Android, iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad.

Most good anti-virus packages have age based internet control, such as that offered by Norton. Products like these enable parents to register a computer through the user's date of birth, blocking websites which are not age appropriate. These products are not free, but some will also allow you to monitor your child's internet usage remotely from your smart phone and will show clips and video links your child has been viewing.

There are a range of other products other than the two named above that provide web protection and parents should always compare all the options before choosing a product.

GIVING A DEVICE AS A GIFT
Computers, tablets, laptops and phones are often given to children as presents, usually wrapped by the family and still sealed from the retailer. It is good practice before wrapping it, for parents to open it and set the machine up themselves. This allows parents the opportunity to install any web protection software and set themselves up as the sole administrators with passwords only known by them. This prevents children installing anything unwanted at a later date. Any responsible retailer will provide you with support and guidance in doing this.

WEB CAM CAUTION
Some websites are programmed to switch webcams on automatically; it is important that young people check that a webcam integral to their machine is only turned on if you have chosen for it to be so.

MALWARE, ADWARE AND VIRUSES
There is much in the world of malware, adware and viruses that can and will target children. This type of software accesses and copies personal details, displays explicit content or directs the user to sites designed to groom etc. Maintaining up to date and legal versions of security packages significantly reduces this risk.

Keeping your child safer online