

Top tips for PlayStation



This guide provides some specific advice about setting up parental controls on your PlayStation3 or PSP. To learn more about safe and responsible gaming read our **How to Stay Safe Guide**¹.

✦ The Basics

Gaming devices, like the PS3 and PSP, provide a wide range of exciting activities for young people. These devices have in-built wireless so they can connect to your home internet or other wifi hotspots if you sign up to the PlayStation Network. This enables many online functions such as playing with people online, viewing films and TV, purchasing games online, browsing the web and chatting to friends via text, voice and video chat.

PlayStation devices such as the PS3 and PSP have a range of free parental controls. These can be found on the PlayStation Network account (to cover all of the online services) and on the PS3 or PSP console (for offline functions). You need to activate the console parental control settings, for example, to prevent your child playing age-restricted games from a disc or to set up a Family Timer. PlayStation Network parental controls are a bit easier; by registering with your child's correct age for their PlayStation Network account there will be automatic safety settings in place, for example, preventing your child downloading games from the online store which are not age-appropriate. You could also speak to your home internet service provider to see if they have options for filtering the internet on devices accessing your home internet. For example, TalkTalk customers can activate **HomeSafe**².

What is the PlayStation Network? The PSN is an online network which allows you to use your device to play games with people online, access online music, films and TV, and browse the web. It is free to use (though you do need broadband internet access!).

✦ Three steps for parents

1. Understand the capabilities of gaming devices and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming. To help, read our **How to Stay Safe Guide**¹.

2. Find out about the parental controls available - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these. Gaming devices have parental controls to help parents manage their children's gaming; see the advice below for the PlayStation 3 and PSP. Find out about **PEGI age ratings**³ to help you decide which games are appropriate for your child's age.

3. Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online. See our **Family Agreement**⁴ for more ideas. Remember that gaming devices like the PS3 and PSP connect to the internet, so the same advice and rules for keeping safe online apply.

✦ Understanding parental controls on the PS3 and PSP

PlayStation devices such as the PS3 and PSP have a range of free parental controls. These can be found on the PlayStation Network account (to cover all of the online services) and on the PS3 or PSP console (for offline functions).

1. Registering with the PlayStation Network sets up automatic parental controls

PlayStation devices, like the PS3 or PSP, can connect to the internet by joining the PlayStation Network (or PSN), which is an optional service allowing users to play games with people online, access online music, films and TV, and browse the web. Parental control options allow you to manage how your child uses their device. If you decide to sign up to the PSN, then when you register, automatic parental control settings will be set up for children.

See the PlayStation advice about how to set up the PSN either from a **PS3 or PSP**⁵ or from a **computer**⁶.

Set up the PlayStation Network:

You need to set up your own PlayStation Network 'Master Account' and register your children as 'Sub Accounts'. Make sure you register each of your children with their correct age, so that automatic parental control settings are in place. You are then in control of your children's Sub Accounts. This is the same for both PlayStation 3 and PSP.

How to find parental control options:

By registering your child's Sub Account with their correct age, parental control settings will automatically be in place. For example, communication by text, voice or video is blocked for children, and content restriction settings will prevent your child accessing any games, film, music and TV online which are not appropriate for their age.

You can check these automatic parental controls and make any changes by signing into your Master Account and selecting **Account Management**, then **Sub Account Management**, then **Parental Control**.

1 www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide/gaming-devices/how-to-stay-safe

2 www.tinyurl.com/6lpvo3z

3 www.pegi.info

4 www.digizen.org/digicentral/family-agreement.aspx

5 www.tinyurl.com/73qifag

6 <http://uk.playstation.com/registration>

Consider whether this option would be helpful for your family:

- » **Spending limit:** Automatic parental control settings for children will prevent purchases being made. Alternatively, you may like to put some credit in your Wallet and give your child a monthly spending limit. See PlayStation's advice about **using your PlayStation Wallet**⁷.

2. Select parental controls on the console (eg. PS3 or PSP)

You can put in place settings on the console to control which games and films can be accessed, and restrict internet access. The parental control settings on the console are not set up automatically, so you will need to change the settings as appropriate for your child.

How to find the parental control options:

- » Switch on the PlayStation 3 or PSP and find **Settings** in the main menu on the console
- » Select **Security Settings**. Decide which parental control settings are appropriate for your child by reading through these questions.

You can also read PlayStation's instructions⁸.

These parental control options are particularly helpful:

- » **Restrict access to games based on age rating:** To prevent your child from accessing age-restricted games, you need to select the appropriate age rating in the parental controls settings.






The relationship between the PEGI age rating for games and the PlayStation parental control level:

 – Parental control level 9	 – Parental control level 7
 – Parental control level 5	 – Parental control level 3
 – Parental control level 2	

So if your child was 12, you would only want them to play games that had a PEGI rating of 12 or under, therefore you would select Parental Control level 5 on the PlayStation.

- » **Restrict access to films based on age rating:** To prevent your child from accessing age-restricted films, you need to select the appropriate age rating for DVDs (under **DVD Parental control**) and Blu-ray Discs (under **BD Parental control**) in the parental controls settings. It is a good idea to select your country under **BD/ DVD Parental Control Region Code**, as different countries have different age rating systems.

The relationship between the BBFC age rating for films and the PlayStation parental control level:

 – Parental control level 10	 – Parental control level 7
 – Parental control level 5	 – Parental control level 3
 – Parental control level 1	

So if your child was 15, you would only want them to watch films that had a BBFC rating of 15 or under, therefore you would select Parental Control level 6 on the PlayStation.

Consider whether these options would be helpful for your family:

- » **Restrict internet access:** You can prevent access to the internet browser by selecting On for the Internet Browser Start Control option. If you would like to browse the internet together with your child, you can just enter the passcode to enable internet browsing. If you would prefer to allow internet browsing, but have filters in place to reduce the likelihood of coming across inappropriate content, you could pay to use PlayStation's filtering service on the **PSP**⁹ or **PS3**¹⁰, or you could speak to your home internet service provider to see if they have options for filtering the internet on devices accessing your home internet.

3. Know what to do about inappropriate contact

PlayStation devices can be used to communicate by text, voice or video. The PSP has a built-in microphone, although with the PS3 you need a headset for voice chat, and both require a camera for video chat.

Speak to your child about what is acceptable behaviour when communicating via their console. Ensure that your child knows how to prevent someone from communicating with them and encourage them to tell you if something has happened.

There are two steps you can take if someone has behaved inappropriately towards your child:

- » **Block the player:** Your child can add a person to their block list if they no longer want to receive messages from that person: Select a message sent from that person and press the triangle button on the controller. Select **Add to Block List**.
- » **Report the player:** If it is getting more serious and your child is being harassed or bullied by someone (which is often called 'griefing' in the gaming world) you can report it using the **PlayStation Grief Reporting form**¹¹ or often there are in-game Grief Reporting functions in the games menu, which may be called something like **Report Abuse**, **Report to a Moderator** or **Grief Reporting**.

If you suspect that your child is or has been the subject of an inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person you should report this to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at **www.ceop.police.uk in the UK**, or internationally at **www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com**.

Further Information

Childnet's gaming leaflet, www.childnet.com/downloads/Online-gaming.pdf, offers advice about gaming, covering consoles and web games and apps.

Video games trade body UKIE offers advice about how to play games safely and sensibly www.ukie.info/playsafe.

Visit the Pan European Game Information website: www.pegi.info to find out more about age ratings.

Check out PlayStation's parent support page <http://us.PlayStation.com/support/parents/index.htm>.

To find out more about social networking, see Childnet's guide for parents www.childnet.com/downloads/blog_safety.pdf.

For more advice for parents about online safety see www.childnet.com/kia.

7 www.tinyurl.com/7l5a8h5
8 www.tinyurl.com/869llpc

9 www.tinyurl.com/82y78w6
10 www.tinyurl.com/7qlu327
11 www.tinyurl.com/6tj4nz



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