

# A guide to staying safe

**ONLINE**



**for young people**

## What are the risks?

The internet is full of fun and interesting things, and it's a great way to connect with friends. However, it is essential to know how to stay safe online.

Some people might try to trick you into clicking harmful links or sharing personal information. Sometimes, something you've shared might be used to bully or frighten you. We'll share our top tips for staying safe online, keeping your information secure and how to spot fake news.



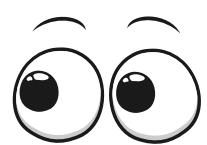
# Top tips for staying safe online



Think before you post - remember once you post something, you lose control of it (for example if somebody screenshots or shares it), be mindful that things stay on the internet forever.



Don't share any personal information - don't share anything that could be used to identify you including your full name, date of birth, address or phone number.



Look out for phishing and scams - phishing is when somebody tries to trick you into giving them information and scamming could come in the form of links from emails or messages that ask you to log in and share information.



Consider who you're talking to - be mindful of people tricking you into trusting them online, even if you like and trust someone you've met online, never share any personal information.



Keep your device secure - use strong passwords, consider setting up 2-factor authentication, keep your apps up to date and log out when you're using public or shared devices.



Do not share passwords - you should never give your password or log-in information to anybody.



Cover your camera - some viruses will let someone access your camera without you knowing, so make sure to cover it when you aren't using it (this includes webcams on computers and laptops).

# Keeping your information secure

Discovering that your social media account has been hacked or your data stolen can be frightening and distressing. However, there are simple steps you can follow to protect yourself and stay secure.

## **Use strong passwords**

A strong password is one that is difficult for others to guess and challenging for computers to crack. While password managers can help you keep track of your passwords, they can be expensive and are not always entirely secure, so it's important to use them wisely.

Follow these tips to create a strong password:

- Make it hard to guess - make sure your password is more than 8 characters long and use a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and special characters like !, # and %
- Don't use personal information - resist the temptation to use easily identifiable details such as your birthday or the name of a family pet
- Use different passwords for different things - change your passwords regularly and use different passwords for different apps or website log ins

## **Keep your apps up to date**

Device and app updates often include important security fixes, so it's important to regularly download updates for your:

- Phone, tablet or computer
- Apps and games
- Fitness trackers and smart watches
- Smart devices and speakers like Alexa or Google Home.

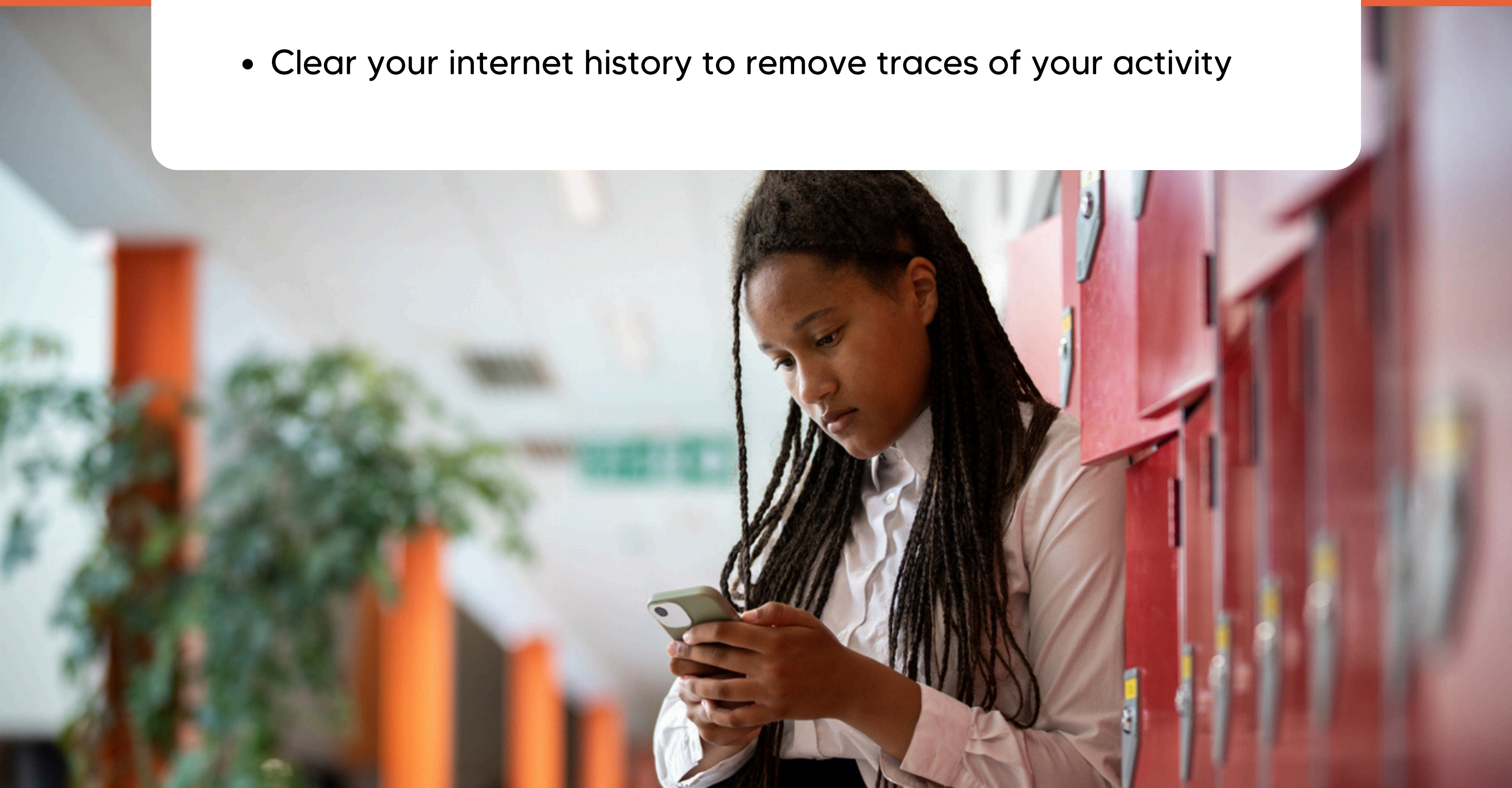
If you need to learn more about updating your devices there is usually information in the settings.

## **Log out of public or shared devices**

Lots of websites keep you logged in even after you close them. If someone else gains access to your phone or device, they might be able to log into your accounts.

If you're using someone else's device or someone might have access to yours, be sure to:

- Log out of all websites and apps when you're finished using them
- Avoid saving any passwords or login information on the device
- Clear your internet history to remove traces of your activity



# How to have a healthy relationship with social media

Social media is a great way to stay in touch with friends and access the latest trends but it can put your wellbeing at risk. Here are some useful tips to help you have a positive relationship with social media and protect your mental health online:

- **Be selective about which accounts you follow**

Follow accounts that make you feel good, don't follow accounts that lead to unhelpful comparisons or ideas which could be unsafe or harmful.

- **Make sure you know who you're talking to**

Consider what you know about the person you're speaking to and what you're sharing. Ask yourself "Do I really know this person?"

- **Settle for nothing less than kindness and respect**

Follow accounts that are being kind and respectful to others and ensure accounts that follow you are behaving in the same way.

- **Don't compare and despair**

Some comparisons are good and give us confidence and boost our self-esteem but some comparisons make us feel inadequate, which makes us less likely to pursue our goals.

- **Set time limits**

One of the best ways to keep your relationship with social media healthy is to limit your use.

- **Switch off**

Another way to help you limit your use of social media is to turn off your notifications.

- **Focus less on likes**

Some people might find that the number of likes they receive on photos affects their mood. Why not try 'hiding' the number of likes you receive on Instagram by changing your settings.

- **Be in control of your scroll**

Consider if you're looking at content that genuinely interests you or if you're falling into the trap of addictive or mindless behaviour that can become unhealthy.

# Fake news

The news you see online or on social media isn't always accurate, and working out the difference between real and fake information can be challenging. Some websites may spread misinformation to alarm you, manipulate your actions, or attract visitors for financial or personal gain.

Here are some tips to help you spot fake news:

- **Check the source**

Verify the name and web address of the website to see if it looks legitimate. Some sites may mimic the appearance of credible sources to trick people.

- **Look for evidence**

Check whether the news is being reported by other reliable and well-known sources. If the information is only found on unfamiliar or questionable sites, it may be false.

- **Don't decide immediately**

Headlines and stories are sometimes crafted to provoke fear or capture interest. Read the article thoroughly, assess its credibility, and consider why the information might be presented in a certain way.

- **Ask someone you trust**

Consult a trusted adult to get their perspective on the information. If you're concerned about something you've read online, you can also reach out to a Childline counsellor for advice.

## Follow us

Follow us on social media to get access to more resources, self-help tips and support service information.



@mymhst

Remember to reach out to your support system if you've been affected by anything you've experienced online.

## Support services

### Local Support

Hull & East Yorkshire

Mind

01482 240200

[heymind.org.uk](http://heymind.org.uk)

Hull Thrive

[howareyoufeeling.org.uk](http://howareyoufeeling.org.uk)

Young Healthy Minds

[eastridinghealthandwellbeing.co.uk](http://eastridinghealthandwellbeing.co.uk)

**SUPPORT**

### National Support

Childline

0800 1111

[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

Young Minds

[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

Anna Freud

[annafreud.org](http://annafreud.org)

Kooth

Podcast  
on Spotify