

ico.

Information Commissioner's Office

children's
code



What is the Children's Code?

The Children's Code is known formally as **Age-appropriate Design Code**.

ICO mandated by Parliament to produce a statutory Code of Practice, through the provision in s123 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).

The Code is grounded in the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and aims to create an open, transparent and safer place for children to play, explore and learn online.

What is the Children's Code?

It is a statutory Code of practice setting out **15 standards** of age-appropriate design for online services which process children's personal data.

Its statutory footing means that the ICO and the Courts must take the code into account where relevant.

The standards in the Code are **rooted in existing data protection laws**. Organisations should conform to the Code and demonstrate that their services **use children's data fairly** and in compliance with data protection law.

What is the code's scope?

Code applies to “relevant **information society services** which are **likely to be accessed by children**” – aged under 18, in the UK.

Information society services are “*any service normally provided for remuneration, at a distance, by electronic means and at the individual request of a recipient of services*”.

Likely to be accessed is defined as “more probable than not”.

Non-conformant services are likely to find it difficult to demonstrate that they process children's data fairly, and comply with data protection requirements.



Why does the Children's Code matter?

The code aims not to protect children from the digital world but instead protect them within it, by ensuring online services are better designed with children in mind.

Companies are actively creating ways to track behaviour

resulting in thousands of individual data points – that reveal a child's...



What have we done so far?

- Commissioned independent research, with surveys on code awareness and support needs of business, and a new project to confirm awareness of data protection and the code among children and parents.
- Conducted industry engagement events, webinars & workshops.
- Developed policy positions, guidance, UX design support, and the Children's code 'Best interests' framework to help ISS understand the risks and benefits of their processing.
- Established an expert Children's Advisory Panel.

What's next for the code?

Transition period ended 2 Sept 2021. Code now in supervision status.

Take an appropriate and proportionate approach to supervision and focus on areas of potential greatest risk of harm to children:

- Social media
- Video and music streaming services
- Online gaming

Regulatory supervision will be both reactive and proactive

What further support for industry?

- Further guidance on age assurance
- Voluntary audits with ISS
- Policy coordination through the Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum, including on incoming online safety laws
- Supporting innovative projects through our regulatory sandbox
- Developing new conformance testing tools for industry

What about parents and children?

- Research to establish levels of awareness of data protection rights and the code amongst children and young people and parents
- Improving our complaints systems for all users, including for children. Training for staff on handling children's complaints
- Conducting focus groups this autumn with young people and parents to identify likely privacy or code related searches
- Attending events hosted by civil society to engage with parents, teachers, professionals

Engaging the media

All about the Children's Code

Opening up the web

New rules will make going online even better for young people.

From September 2021, the Children's Code will be in place. It's a set of rules that will help protect young people from online risks. It will also help them enjoy their time online.

Creating the code

The Children's Code is a set of rules that will help protect young people from online risks. It will also help them enjoy their time online.

Why's it needed?

The internet was not designed with children in mind. It's full of risks that can harm young people. The code will help protect them from these risks.

How will it be enforced?

The code will be enforced by Ofcom. They will make sure that websites and apps follow the rules.

WOW!

A host of parental controls around the world are under the age of 18.

Do you know?

The official birthday of the internet is celebrated to be 1 January 1969.

Three sites to trust

Poptropica
This website is full of games, videos and activities for kids. You can find out about new events and search by theme. The sites and games are all based on large characters and worlds, and you can watch and play it all for free. poptropica.com/uk/uk/

Lego Skills
The Lego site is full of games, videos and instructions for Lego. You can find out about new events and search by theme. The sites and games are all based on large characters and worlds, and you can watch and play it all for free. lego.com/uk/uk/

BBC
BBC offers games and videos for children of all ages. There's lots to go on with all the sites. You can use the "add to my favourites" button on the site to make a list of what you want to watch. Games include everything from "what's your football manager style?" to "what's the best?" bbc.com/uk/uk/

What about schools?



*Arbourthorne Community Primary School, Sheffield, as a 'food-bank'
during the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020*

How engaging with schools?

- Providing guidance for schools on how the code applies to edtech or online services they use
- Attending education conferences in all four countries of the UK
- Have developed GDPR lesson plans
- Additional schools resources focusing on the code:
 - Lesson plans and resources for primary and secondary students
 - New infographic

Engaging with schools

Children's code

- 1 The internet is getting better for young people**
You often share **personal data** (information about yourself) online. Now companies have to offer young people a greater choice about how much personal data they share.
- 2 The ICO's Children's code will help to create this better internet**
The **Children's code** has 15 rules that online services used by young people must follow, creating a safer space for young people to **learn, play, explore and grow**.
- 3 Children and young people's digital rights matter**
Online services like **apps, websites, games, and video streaming services** should respect children and young people's data rights at all times.
- 4 Young people will have more control online**
The code will protect young people from **unwanted adverts, messages or notifications**. Apps, games and websites will have to explain young people's rights using language that's easy to understand.
ACCEPT
- 5 You can complain if you think an online service is not respecting your rights**
If you are not happy with how the service handles your complaint, talk to your parent / carer.
If you still want to complain, you can contact the **ICO**, the organisation that looks after your personal data.

Upcoming work

Milestone	Target date
1. DPIA exemplars <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaming and connected toys	September 2021
2. Age assurance opinion	Sept / Oct 2021
3. Children / Parents' Awareness Benchmarking	Sept / Oct 2021
4. Code lesson plans and infographic	Sept / Oct 2021
5. IFF Benchmarking Phase 2 research and report	October 2021
6. Children / Parents' focus groups	Oct / Nov 2021

Ongoing engagement

- 1:1 engagement with high risk ISS in scope (social media, streaming, gaming)
- Voluntary audits
- Education conferences in 4 countries of the UK
- Industry representative bodies
- DCMS
- International DPAs
- Age assurance research and call for evidence

Signs of success?

- Impact assessment and evaluation of the code for Sept 2022
- Changes in the processing of childrens data announced at major social media companies:



Stay in touch

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