Child-Safe Search & Browser Configuration

Enable Google SafeSearch, Bing SafeSearch, YouTube Restricted Mode, and DNS-level filtering.

NOTE These settings reduce (but cannot eliminate) the risk of children encountering inappropriate content. No filter is 100% effective - combine these technical controls with ongoing conversation.

GOOGLE SAFESEARCH

Google SafeSearch filters explicit sexual content and graphic violence from search results. It is not perfect, but significantly reduces accidental exposure.

1 Go to google.com and click Settings (bottom right)

Or go directly to google.com/safesearch

2 Select 'Filter explicit results'

This enables the highest level of SafeSearch filtering.

3 Click 'Lock SafeSearch' (requires Google account sign-in)

Locking SafeSearch prevents users from changing the setting without the account password. Sign in to your Google account first, then go to google.com/safesearch and lock it.

4 Verify it works

Search for something potentially problematic and confirm SafeSearch is catching it. Look for the colored balls in the top right of Google search results - these indicate SafeSearch is active.

NOTE SafeSearch must be set for each browser separately. If your child uses Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Edge, configure SafeSearch on each browser, or use DNS-level filtering (see below) to apply it network-wide.

BING SAFESEARCH

1 Go to bing.com and click 'Settings' (three lines menu, top right)

2 Go to SafeSearch and select 'Strict'

'Strict' filters adult content from search results and images.

3 Save settings

Click Save. Note: Bing SafeSearch is tied to your device/browser settings and may not lock as firmly as Google's - DNS filtering is more effective for Bing.

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YOUTUBE RESTRICTED MODE

YouTube Restricted Mode hides videos flagged as inappropriate for children. For children under 13, the YouTube Kids app (separate app) is a much safer option.

1 Sign in to your Google account on YouTube

youtube.com > Sign in

2 Click your profile photo > Restricted Mode

Toggle Restricted Mode ON.

3 Lock Restricted Mode

After enabling, a 'Lock Restricted Mode on this browser' option appears. Click it and re-enter your Google password. This prevents your child from turning it off.

4 Repeat on every browser and device

Restricted Mode is per-browser. Set it on Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and the YouTube app separately.

YouTube Kids App: For children under 10, use the YouTube Kids app instead of regular YouTube. Available on iOS and Android, it limits content to age-appropriate material and removes comments entirely.

DNS-LEVEL FILTERING (Network-Wide Protection)

DNS filtering works at your internet router level - it applies to every device on your home Wi-Fi network automatically, without configuring each device separately. This is the most comprehensive home protection.

Option A: Cloudflare Family DNS (Free) Blocks malware and adult content across your entire network.

- Primary DNS: 1.1.1.3 | Secondary DNS: 1.0.0.3
- Configure in your router's admin settings (typically at 192.168.1.1 or 192.168.0.1 in a browser).

Option B: OpenDNS FamilyShield (Free) Pre-configured DNS service that blocks adult content and proxies.

- Primary DNS: 208.67.222.123 | Secondary DNS: 208.67.220.123
- No account required. Apply these DNS servers in your router's DHCP settings.

Option C: CleanBrowsing (Free tier available) More granular category filtering - blocks adult, gambling, and drug-related content.

- Family Filter DNS: 185.228.168.168 | 185.228.169.168

1 Access your router admin panel

Open a browser and type 192.168.1.1 or 192.168.0.1. Log in (default credentials often printed on router label - change these if you haven't).

2 Find DNS Settings

Usually under 'WAN Settings', 'Internet', or 'Advanced > DNS'. Change Primary and Secondary DNS to your chosen service's addresses.

3 Save and restart router

Save settings. The router may restart. All devices on your Wi-Fi will now use filtered DNS.

4 Test the filtering

Visit cleantest.cleanbrowsing.org to verify filtering is working properly.

BROWSER-SPECIFIC SETTINGS

Google Chrome: Settings > Safety Check > Safe Browsing > Enhanced Protection. Also: Add a Supervised user profile for children.

Safari (iPhone/iPad): Settings > Screen Time > Content & Privacy Restrictions > Content Restrictions > Web Content > Limit Adult Websites.

Firefox: Install the 'LeechBlock NG' or 'uBlock Origin' extensions. Go to Settings > Privacy & Security > Enable DNS over HTTPS > Use NextDNS or Cloudflare Family.

Microsoft Edge: Settings > Family Safety > manage through Microsoft Family Safety account.

COMPLETE QUICK CHECKLIST

- [ ] Google SafeSearch enabled AND locked on all browsers
- [ ] Bing SafeSearch set to Strict
- [ ] YouTube Restricted Mode enabled AND locked on all browsers
- [ ] YouTube Kids app installed (for children under 10)
- [ ] DNS filtering configured on home router (Cloudflare Family or CleanBrowsing)
- [ ] Device-level parental controls also configured (see Device Setup Guide)