Lock up your loot

Just as you wouldn't leave your front door or windows open, you shouldn't leave your computer or phone unlocked.

Your computer, tablet and phone hold loads of information about you: your name, address, birthday, a list of your friends, hobbies, text messages, private photos and videos. What else might be on there?

All of this is personal information which you need to keep secure. It is valuable to you and to criminals. Make sure you keep it locked up!

Top 5 crimes online

There are lots of ways that people try to steal personal information and cause trouble online. Here are the top five:

1. **Hacking**.
   Hackers try to break into other people's computers to steal personal information, files or cause trouble.
2. **Phishing.**
   Criminals set up fake websites which look like real websites, like Facebook or a bank. They send emails pretending to be from that site saying you need to update your details. If you click on the link in the email, it takes you to the fake site. If you enter your details, hey presto, they have got your password and can take over your account.
3. **Viruses and malware.**
   Viruses are 'malware' - nasty pieces of software that can mess up your computer, delete files or make your screen freeze. Once your computer is infected, viruses then try to spread to other computers, often by email. Criminals also use malware like 'Trojans' to get access to computers and make trouble.
4. **Rafting.**
   RATs are 'Remote Access Trojans'. A Trojan is software which is put on your computer without you knowing it. Remote Access means criminals can take control of your computer, spy on your private files, delete stuff and even turn on your webcam!
5. **Clickjacking.**
   Criminals try to get people to click on links which download viruses, RATs or other malware by making the links look interesting. The link might advertise a funny video with a caption like 'OMG! You won't believe what this girl did' or say 'Click for a free iPod'. Don't click on links from people you don't recognise or seem too good to be true!

5 ways to keep your secret stuff secret!

Though there are criminals who might try to steal your stuff it is easy to protect your computer. Here are five things you should always do.

1. **Set strong passwords!**
   Your password is like the keys to your house. You should use a different one for each site you use and make sure it is a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Don't use ones which are easy to guess, like QWERTY, 123456 or Password!!
2. **Check URLs.**
   The URL is the address of the website. You can find it in the address bar at the top of the page. The URL for Thinkuknow is - http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk - can you see it on this page? When you click a link you should always check the URL is the one you would expect for the site before you enter any details.
3. **Don't click on links from people you don't know.**
   These could take you to phishing sites or download viruses or malware onto your computer. Never enter your details into a site you're not sure about — even if the link has come from a friend.
4. **Always use antivirus software.**
   If you have got your own computer make sure you get anti-virus software. If your parent or carer bought it for you ask them to make sure you have got one installed. They can find out more at Get Safe Online
5. **Treat your password like your toothbrush and lock your phone!**
   Don't share your password, even with your best friend! If you share your password or leave a phone or computer unlocked then someone else could access any accounts you haven't logged out of. They could spread rumours about you, say nasty things about other people and get you in trouble. They could pretend to be you!

Worried about viruses, hacking or identity theft?

Have you been hacked?

Most email and social networking websites let you report if someone has stolen your account. Visit their Help or Account information pages – again, get an adult to help you if you are having trouble.

Need more information about online security?

Make sure your parent or carer knows how to protect any computers, mobiles or tablets in the house. Get them to visit Get Safe Online.