

The information below has been taken from the NSPCC site and links are included should you need more information.

### **Leaving children at home alone**

*Deciding if your child is ready to be left home alone can be a tricky decision. There are lots of things to think about. Plus, there are no hard and fast 'home alone' rules or laws because every child is different. Whether you or your child are comfortable with the idea will often depend on how mature and adaptable your child is – and we all know how much this can vary from child to child.*

*Strange as it may seem, there's no set age for leaving children home alone. The law simply says that you shouldn't leave a child alone if they'll be at risk. There's such a wide variation in the rate that children mature that it would be almost impossible to come up with a "one size fits all" law. Instead, the choice is left to parents.*

*There might not be a specific legal age to leave children alone but it's safe to say babies, toddlers and young children should **never** be left alone, even if it's just while you pop down the road. Even if they're sleeping peacefully when you leave they could well wake up and get very upset when you're not there to look after them. They would not be able to protect themselves in an emergency and may even try to leave the property to find you.*

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone>

### **Being aware of the risks outside the home**

*It's something every parent experiences. The day that their child starts asking if they can go out on their own or with friends. It's just a natural part of their growing independence and, like every part of growing up, it can be a challenging hurdle for a parent to overcome.*

*Just like deciding when a child's old enough to be [left at home on their own](#), there's no set age when you know it will be safe for them to go out without you. Obviously, toddlers and young children won't be able to stay safe without you watching over them, and even older children have different levels of maturity. So some 11 year olds will be quite capable of going to the park or the shops on their own but others might not be ready to do this safely.*

*As well as thinking about how mature your child is for their age, the decision about whether you're happy for them to go out alone will depend on where they're planning to go. For example, going to the playground round the corner is very different to catching a bus to the local shops.*

*It's a good idea to be aware of the risks that children out alone might face – just to check that you've considered ways to minimise them. Risks could include:*

- getting lost

- *danger from traffic*
- *bullying from other children*
- *stranger danger*
- *grooming*
- *running into gangs*
- *exposure to alcohol or drugs*

*It might seem like a scary list, but your guidance can help your child keep themselves safe*

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/>