The Children's Code – a simple guide

The Age Appropriate Design Code – or 'Children's Code' – is a data protection code of practice for online services, such as apps, online games, and web and social media sites, likely to be accessed by children.

It translates the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements into design standards for online services, helping businesses understand what is expected of them.

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.

If you want to understand what the code is all about then this document is a good place to start. Much more information can be found in the code itself.

The Children's Code came into force on 2 September 2020 and you now have 12 months to get everything in place. The ICO is providing a package of support for all sizes of business along the way. Organisations need to conform by 2 September 2021.

Organisations that do not follow the code could face enforcement action by the ICO which includes compulsory audits, orders to stop processing and fines of up to 4% of global turnover.

ico.
Information Commissioner's Office

children's code

What do we need to do?

1 Put the children first.

What's the age range of people who use our service?

What do we know about the age of individual users?

How much personal data do we really need?

Should we be sharing their personal data?

Is it fair to children to use their personal data that way?

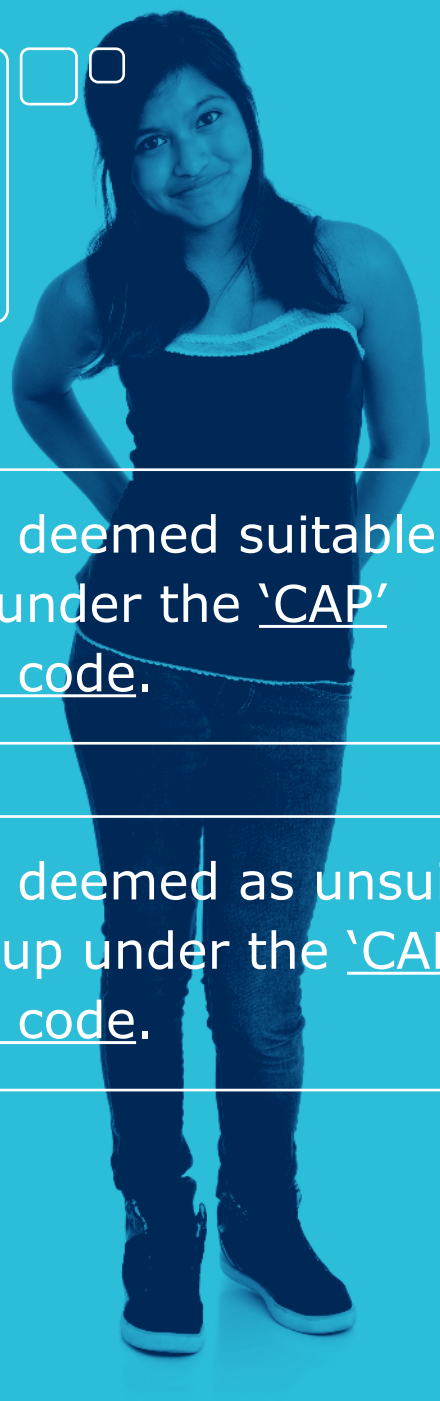
When we use children's personal data, how might it affect their privacy? Their health? Their wellbeing?

2 Give children a high privacy service by default.

- Optional uses of personal data switched 'off' by default.
- Behavioural advertising switched 'off' by default.
- Privacy settings set to 'high' by default.
- Data sharing limited by default.
- Showing location to the world 'off' by default.

3 Give children an age appropriate service even if they change their default settings.

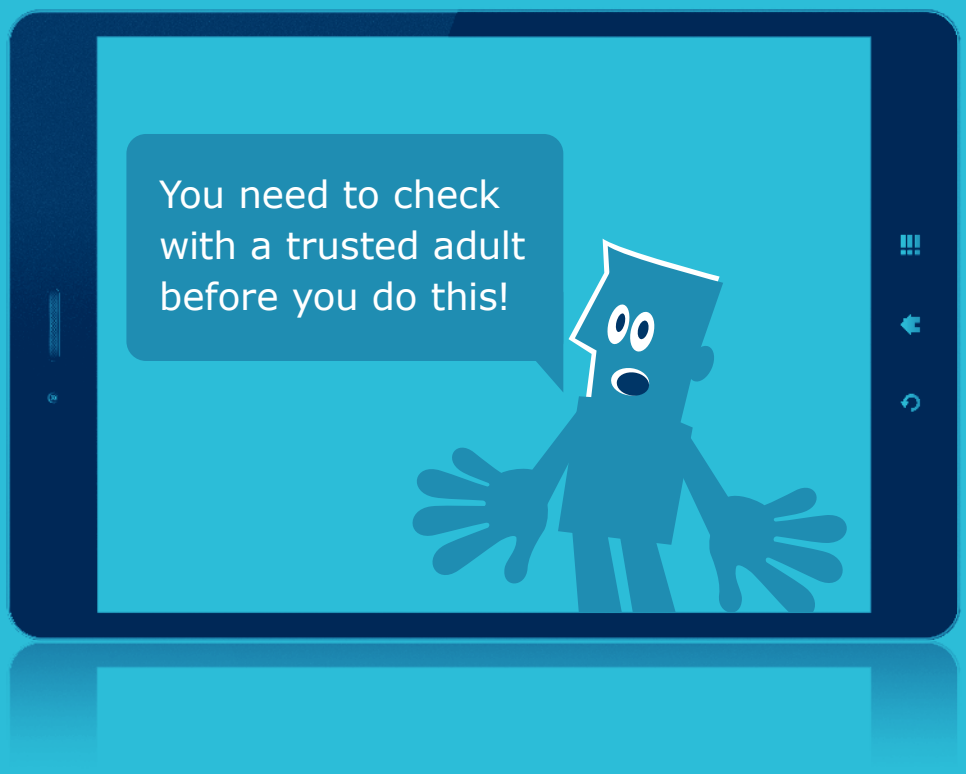
Actually – I'd like to see targeted advertising...



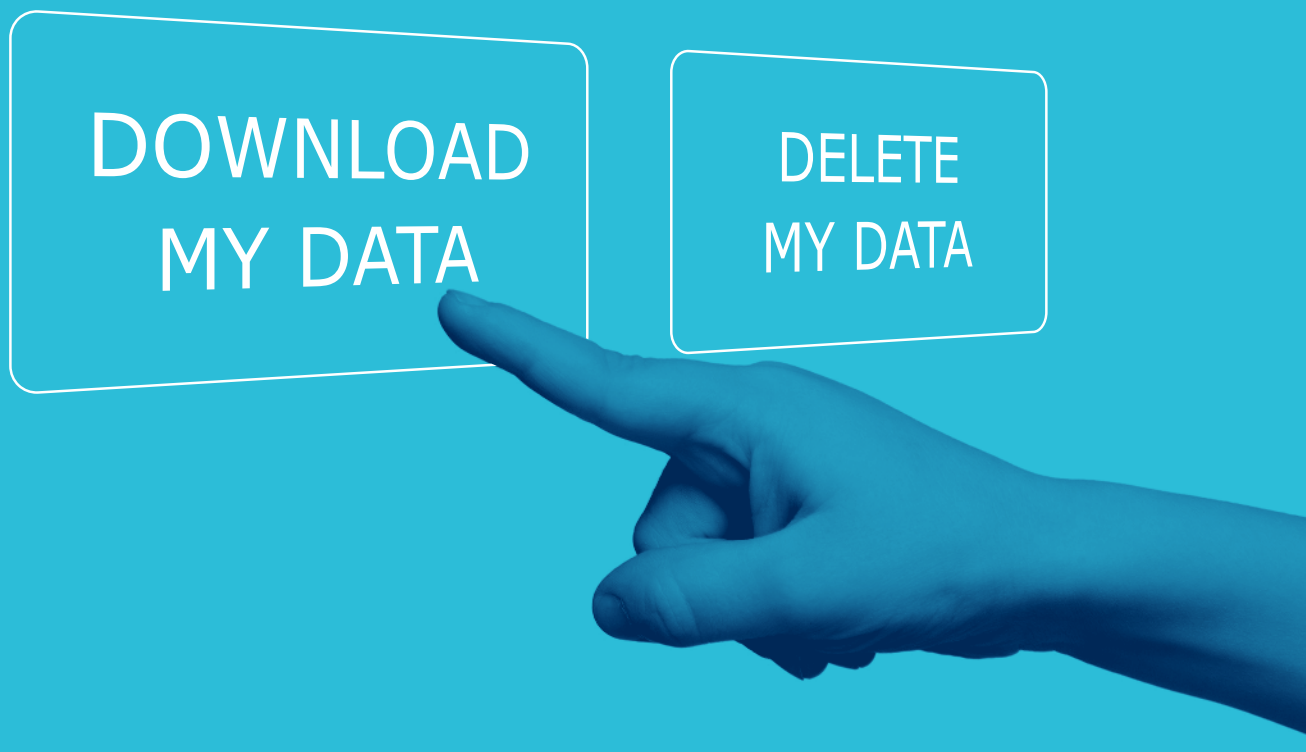
advertising deemed suitable for age group under the 'CAP' advertising code.

advertising deemed as unsuitable for age group under the 'CAP' advertising code.

4 Provide age appropriate communications.



5 Provide tools which help children when they need it.



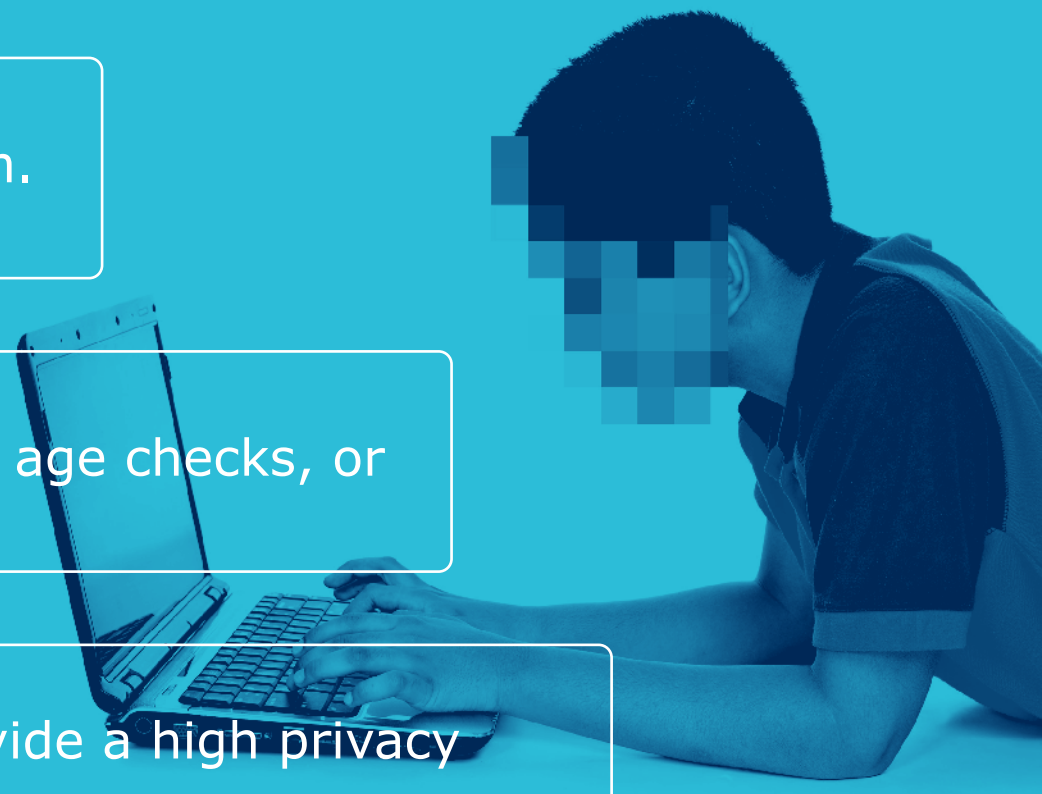
What if we don't know how old our users are?

It depends what you are doing with their data and what impact that might have on children. Some options are:

1 ask them.

2 do some age checks, or

3 just provide a high privacy service to all users by default.



For more information and guidance, visit ico.org.uk/childrenscode