



MANIFESTO · 2026

# The Internet should adapt to **children.**

A global commitment to make childhood  
visible in the design of the digital world.

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Children should not carry the full burden of adapting to an Internet designed for adults.

## 01 - OUR DECLARATION

# Childhood must be visible in the architecture of the Internet.

Children learn, connect, create, play and grow online. The Internet is now part of childhood - but childhood was never placed at the centre of its design.

The result is a digital environment that often expects children and families to understand every risk, configure every setting and absorb the consequences of systems built primarily for adults.

**Our proposition**

**Children should not have to adapt to the Internet.**

**The Internet should adapt to children.**

**A child-friendly Internet is not a smaller version of the adult Internet. It is a digital environment designed to support childhood itself.**

## 02 · WHAT WE BELIEVE

# Protection and participation are not opposites.

Children's right to protection exists alongside their rights to information, education, play, privacy, expression, association and meaningful participation.

01

## Rights travel online

Children do not leave their rights behind when they connect.

02

## Design shapes outcomes

Defaults, incentives and architecture influence opportunity and wellbeing.

03

## Responsibility is shared

Governments, networks, services, schools and communities each hold part of the solution.

04

## Privacy supports safety

Appropriate experiences do not require unnecessary exposure of identity.

**The measure of success is not simply whether harm is blocked. It is whether children are safer while retaining access, agency, opportunity and a pathway toward confident autonomy.**

## 03 · OUR PRINCIPLES

# Four commitments for a child-friendly Internet

01

## Safe by Design

Prevent and reduce risk through safer defaults, proportionate safeguards and clear accountability.

02

## Age-Appropriate by Design

Respond to children's developmental context with suitable content, features, permissions and explanations.

03

## Digital Wellbeing by Design

Support healthy attention, agency, rest, creativity, connection and meaningful participation.

04

## Child Digital Autonomy

Allow protection to evolve into greater choice, confidence and independence as capability grows.

These principles belong together. Safety without access can become exclusion. Age-appropriateness without privacy can become surveillance. Wellbeing without autonomy can become permanent control.

## PRINCIPLE 01

# Safe by Design

**Safety should be built into the environment from the first connection - not added only after harm occurs.**

**What this requires**

- Safer defaults across networks, devices and digital services.
- Risk assessment before features are released to children.
- Clear responsibility for prevention, response, redress and learning.
- Proportionate protections that preserve beneficial access and participation.

**Design test**

**The burden of safety should move upstream - from the individual child toward the institutions that design, operate and govern digital environments.**

## PRINCIPLE 02

# Age-Appropriate by Design

**Children are not one uniform group. Digital experiences should respond to evolving capabilities, needs and rights.**

**What this requires**

- Interfaces, content, permissions and explanations suited to developmental context.
- Minimum necessary assurance rather than broad identity disclosure.
- Avoid one-size-fits-all restrictions based only on a birthday.
- Make important settings understandable to children and caregivers.

**Design test**

**Age-appropriate design should make the wider Internet respond more intelligently to childhood - not confine children to a permanently separate Internet.**

## PRINCIPLE 03

# Digital Wellbeing by Design

**Digital environments should enrich childhood rather than compete endlessly for attention.**

**What this requires**

- Healthy rhythms instead of compulsive engagement patterns.
- Meaningful choice over notifications, recommendations and time.
- Design that supports learning, creativity, friendship, movement and rest.
- Wellbeing measures evaluated with children, not imposed without them.

**Design test**

**The objective is not simply less technology. It is better technology: purposeful, balanced and supportive of development.**

## PRINCIPLE 04

# Child Digital Autonomy

**Protection should progressively give way to confidence, judgement, choice and independence.**

**What this requires**

- Strong support during earlier developmental stages.
- Transparent transitions as capabilities and responsibilities grow.
- Opportunities to practise decision-making in supported environments.
- A clear pathway toward independent, informed digital participation.

**Design test**

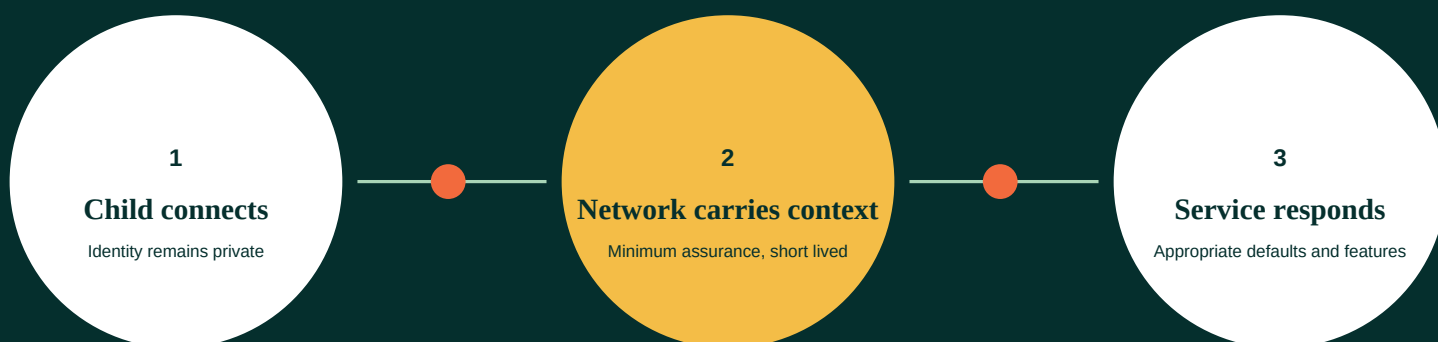
**A child-friendly Internet must never become a permanent cage. Its purpose is to support children on the journey toward autonomy.**



## 04 · HOW IT CAN WORK

# Recognise the context, not the child's identity.

A privacy-preserving assurance signal can help networks and digital services deliver an appropriate experience without unnecessarily revealing who a child is.



#### Four operating requirements

- Share only the minimum context needed for a legitimate response.
- Maintain continuity across cellular, home, school and public connections.
- Separate roles so no participant automatically receives every piece of information.
- Make errors challengeable and subject the system to independent oversight.

## PRIVACY BY DESIGN

# Protection should follow the context - without following the child.

A service should receive only the attributes needed for one legitimate response, not a child's name, civil identity, source record or cross-service activity history.

## The system may enable

- A suitable search or video mode
- Age-appropriate features and permissions
- Wellbeing-supportive defaults
- Access to learning and trusted help

## The system must not become

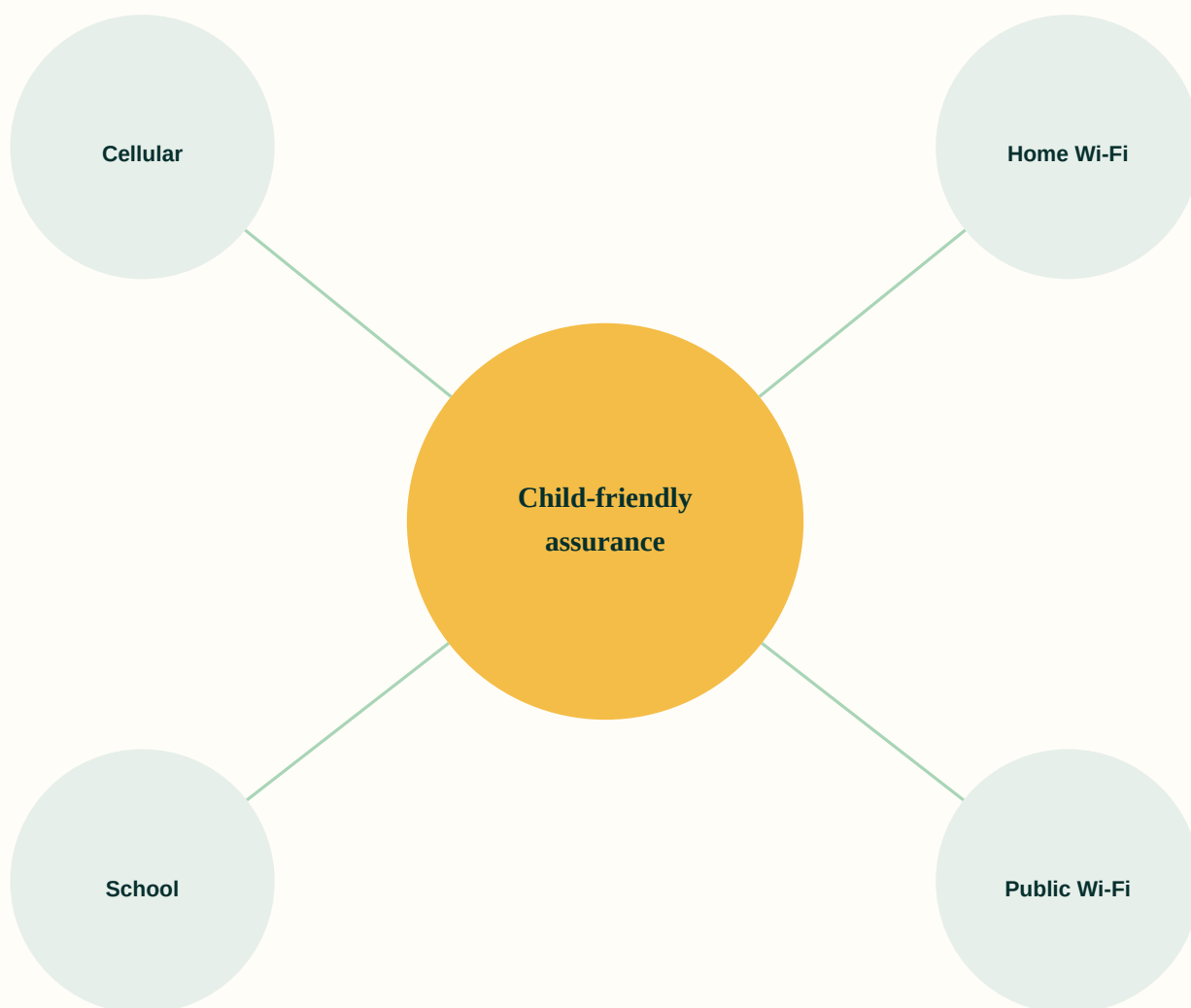
- A universal child identifier
- A national browsing database
- Commercial profiling or unrelated reuse
- Permanent restriction without a path to autonomy

**Purpose limitation · minimum disclosure · short-lived assurance · strong security · independent governance · meaningful redress**

WHEREVER CHILDREN CONNECT

# A coherent experience across a fragmented network.

Children move between networks throughout the day. Appropriate support should not disappear simply because the connection changes.



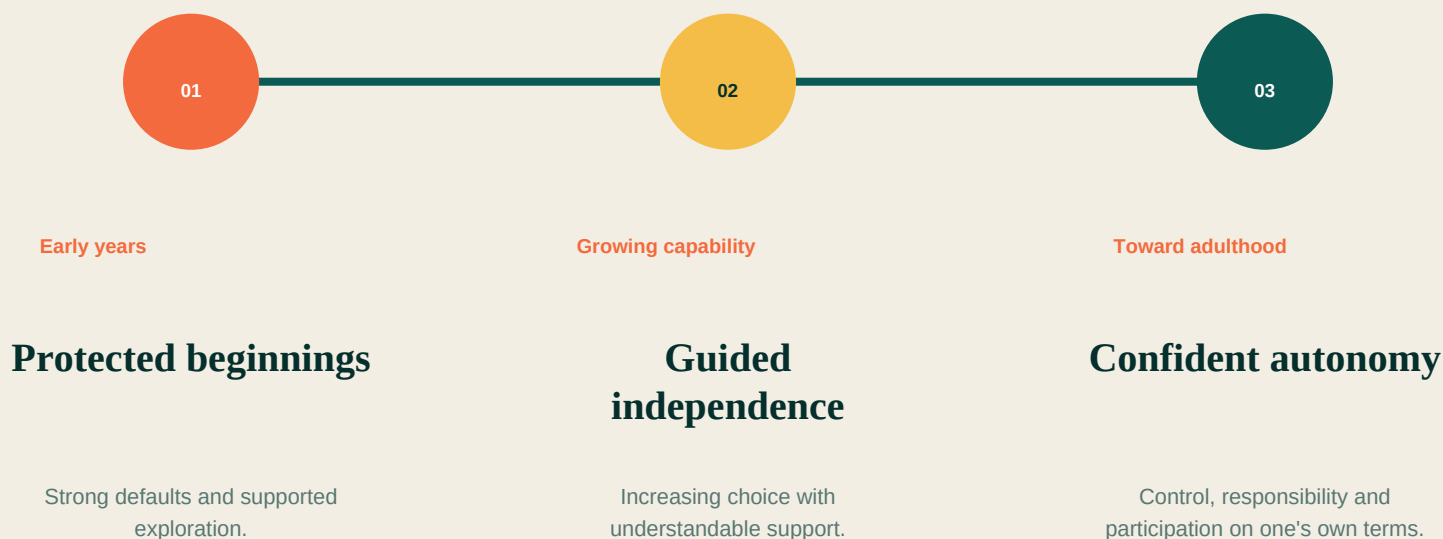
**Continuity does not mean continuous tracking.**

Assurance should be scoped, proportionate and designed to avoid creating a persistent record of where a child goes or what they do.

## 05 · A PATHWAY, NOT A SWITCH

# Protection should evolve into autonomy.

A child-friendly Internet supports development over time, providing stronger safeguards early on and progressively widening independence as skills, judgement and confidence grow.



**Capability is more than age alone. Transitions should be understandable, contestable and sensitive to development, disability, context and the young person's own voice.**

## 06 - FROM IDEA TO ECOSYSTEM

# It takes a nation to reshape a network.

No family, school, operator or digital service can present child-friendly Internet alone. A national framework aligns distinct responsibilities to a shared public outcome.

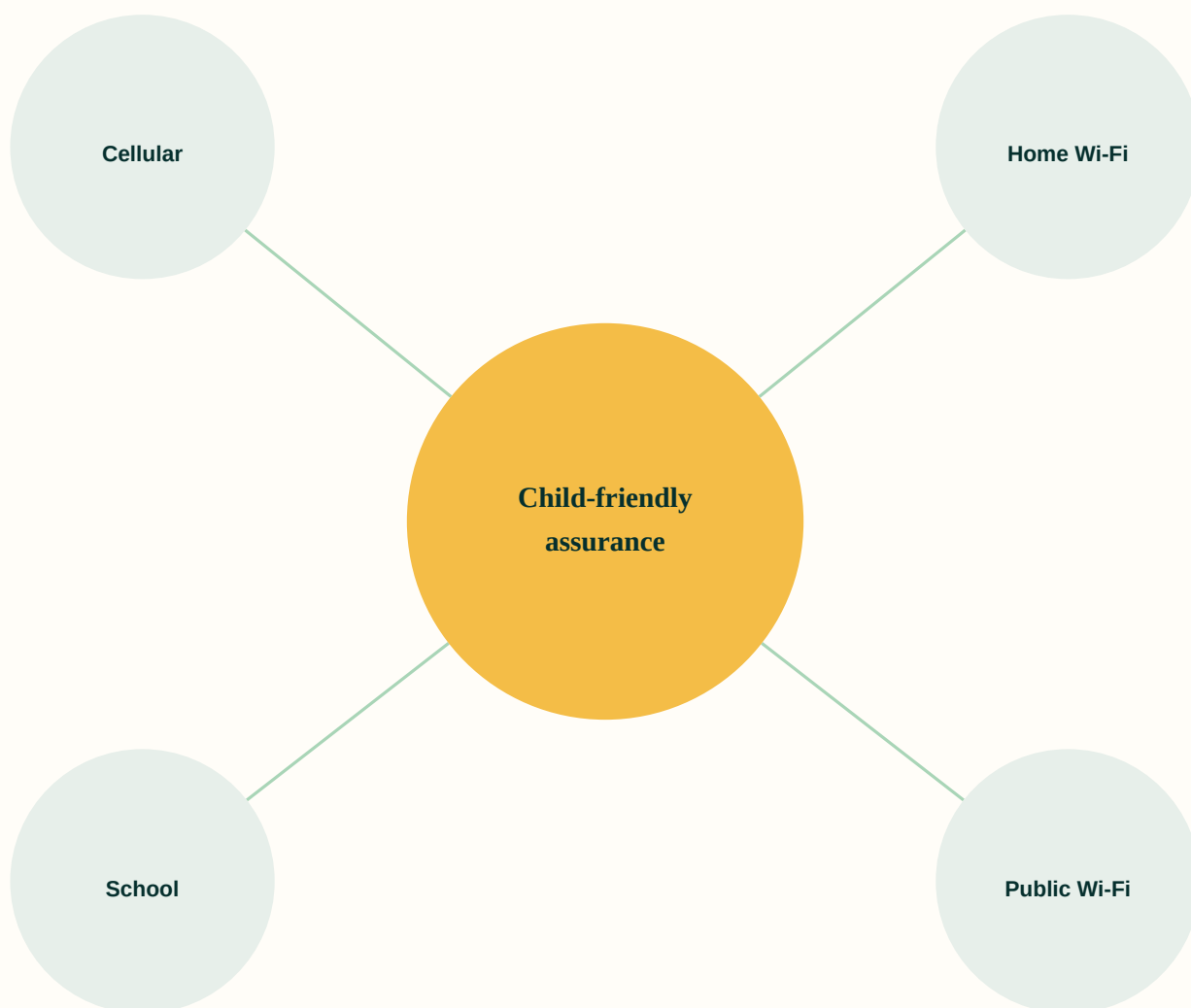


The framework coordinates responsibilities; it does not centralise children's identities or browsing activity.

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## 08 · LIMITS ON POWER

# A child-friendly Internet must not become infrastructure for surveillance or exclusion.

The legitimacy of the proposition depends on clear limits, independent scrutiny and the ability of children and families to understand and challenge decisions.

- 1 **No universal child identifier exposed across services.**
- 2 **No commercial profiling, advertising expansion or unrelated reuse.**
- 3 **No permanent restriction that prevents growing autonomy.**
- 4 **No scaling before independent evaluation and public scrutiny.**
- 5 **No unfair denial of education, participation or essential information.**
- 6 **No system without correction, redress and meaningful human oversight.**

## Trust must be designed, demonstrated and continuously earned.



# Let us build an Internet that sees childhood - and responds with care.

We invite governments, telecom operators, technology companies, digital services, educators, researchers, child-rights organisations, parents and young people to turn these principles into policy, infrastructure, products and everyday practice.

Our shared pledge

**Children should not have to adapt to the Internet.**

**The Internet should adapt to children.**

Read · share · discuss · demonstrate · evaluate · improve

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