

WhatsApp - What's the problem?

View once messages: when sending a photo or video, you can set it so it can only be viewed once by respondents. Screenshots are also blocked when using this function.

Disappearing messages: With disappearing messages, you can control how long a message can be seen before it is deleted (24 hours, 7 days or 90 days). Once set this will only work for new messages.

Location sharing: You can share your location on WhatsApp. Talk to your child about when this would be appropriate to use but also the potential danger of sharing their location, for example with strangers.

How old is your child online?

Has your child (or you on their behalf) signed up to access social media/or a game online but have said that they are older than they are so they can have an account? For example, did your 8 year old join TikTok and put their age as 13 or did you create their account and put your own age? If so, please read some of the implications outlined below that you should think about.

TikTok thinks your child is 13 when they join but they are in fact 8, then by the time your child reaches 13, the app will think they are 18. This puts your child at risk of viewing content that is not age appropriate and may mean your child will view adverts aimed at adults. In addition, now the app thinks your child is an adult, they will have access to all functionalities whereas some apps place restrictions on access to under 18s for example to direct messaging). The following news article from Ofcom explains this in further detail as well as providing tips to help keep your child safe online: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/risks-of-children-using-fake-ages-on-social-media>

WhatsApp: group chats



You must be at least 16 years old to register for and use WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows you to send messages and videos.

Group chats

One of the main features is that it has a Group chat function that are set up by one person (who is the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group. You can leave a group chat at any point so talk to your child and encourage them to leave any chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

In settings, you can change who can add your child to groups, for example, you can change the settings to 'my contacts', which means that only those in your child's contacts can add them to a group.

Online Bullying

WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying (but not as yet in our school), for example sending nasty messages or sharing images of other children without their permission to embarrass them. It's important to have regular chats with your child about their online life and that they understand that they must talk to you or another trusted adult if they are being bullied. This is a helpful article from BullyingUK which talks about what to do if you are being bullied online:

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/>

Blocking/Reporting

If your child is using WhatsApp, then show them how to block and report a contact. You can find out how here:

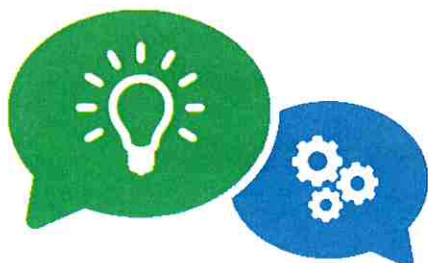
<https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-a-contact>

Be Kind

How we behave online should be the same as how we behave face to face. This YouTube video from Dr Linda Papadopoulos tells us how we can encourage our children to be kind online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q>

Further information

- <https://www.whatsapp.com/safety/>



internet
matters

Scratch Desktop What is it?

What is Scratch Desktop?

Scratch is a coding tool which many schools use (and which we will be using in school from this January) to develop and encourage coding skills in the children. It is a free online tool, which can be downloaded from <https://scratch.mit.edu/download>.



Who should use it?

Scratch is designed specifically for young people (ages 8 and up) to help them develop 21st century learning skills: thinking creatively, communicating clearly, analyzing systematically, using technologies fluently, collaborating effectively and designing imaginatively. As a school we do start the children learning scratch in its basic form from Year 1/2.

What do they Learn from it?

The children learn programming. Creating games is fun, and using Scratch makes this activity accessible even to the youngest learners because compared to other programming languages, Scratch is intuitive and easy to learn. This activity engages students and motivates them to learn.

Many younger students shy away from programming because the syntax is confusing and frustrating. Scratch's drag-and-drop block structure gets rid of the syntax problems while reinforcing the logic and intuition behind programming. Understanding how Scratch works also makes it easier to learn new computer programming languages.

ScratchJr

Aimed at younger children (ages 5-7), ScratchJr teaches your child programming skills as they create their own stories and games: <https://www.scratchjr.org/>



What parents should be aware of?

Scratch is a pretty safe tool, but please keep in mind that older children use it too and the online program sharing facility might mean that children see programs written by much older children. There will therefore be a danger of children being exposed to content that may not be appropriate. There is plenty that parents can do to guard against this. For more information about how parents can do this please visit <https://scratch.mit.edu/parents>

Socialising safely online

Internet Matters have published this helpful article which includes some useful pointers as well as some fun activities for your child:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/socialising-safely-online/>

Instagram update

Instagram have recently announced several updates that have been released or are about to be released.

1. Available now: Option to hide like counts

Users will now have the option to hide like counts on all posts as well as the option to hide like counts on their own posts. You can select to hide like counts on other people's posts in Settings – Privacy – Posts. You can hide like counts on your own posts in the advanced settings for each individual post.

<https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/giving-people-more-control>

2. Available soon: Restricting DMs between teens and adults they don't follow

Adults will be prevented from sending messages to people under 18 who don't follow them. This feature will partly rely on users giving their correct age when they sign up to Instagram so make sure this is correct on your child's account. Remember you must be aged 13+ to sign up.

<https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/continuing-to-make-instagram-safer-for-the-youngest-members-of-our-community>

Omegle

CLOSED

Omegle was a social networking/chat website that **connected two strangers** together for either a text or a video chat. This platform has now been closed earlier in November. Please be aware though, that there are a number of other apps offering a very similar 'service'. Monkey is probably the next most used app of a similar nature.

What should I be aware of?

- No registration is required to access these sites (therefore no age verification) and there are no reporting facilities.
- Users are given an option to save the chat's log and share the link. It is always possible for other users to take screenshots of text and video chats.

We recommend that apps such as Omegle, like Monkey are not used by children due to the potential imagery shared and language used which can be particularly explicit.

Instagram

Instagram

You should be over 13 years of age to set up an account. To create an account, you must enter a date of birth (but this isn't verified). Instagram is used to post photos and videos and users can also DM (direct message), add to their stories (these disappear after 24 hours) and broadcast using IGTV.



A guide to Instagram

If your child is using Instagram, then download a copy of 'A Parent's Guide to Instagram' here: <https://help.instagram.com/377830165708421>

Wellbeing toolkit

Instagram have collaborated with The Jed Foundation (JED) and Internet Matters to create a toolkit which includes tools and suggestions to make your child's experience of using Instagram more positive. The toolkit is designed to help you start conversations with your child about how they use Instagram.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/wellbeing-and-safety-on-instagram-advice-for-parents-and-carers/>

Additional Links for Instagram

More tips from Instagram including how to manage privacy: <https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511>

New Supervision features

You can now supervise your child's Instagram accounts. This gives you the ability to see who they follow and who follows them, see how much time they are spending on Instagram, set daily time limits and schedule breaks. Your child can also easily share when they have made any reports to Instagram with you. Learn more here: <https://familycenter.instagram.com/our-products/family-center/>

Safety Features

Ensure your child knows how to report posts and people as well as how to unfollow and block people, delete and turn off comments. View here: https://help.instagram.com/269765046710559/?helpref=hc_fnav

Your Digital footprint

What is a Digital Footprint?

A Digital Footprint is any information that is available online about you (even information shared by others), for example, photos, posts, and comments that you have made. We need to support children in developing a positive footprint by encouraging them to think about what they share and that they have appropriate privacy settings in place.

Further reading:

Childline provide further information as well as tips on how to protect your privacy and how to delete things online:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/taking-care-your-digital-footprint/>



Houseparty

Houseparty is a face to face (video) social network available as either an app or web version. It became popular during lockdown and is still used by some groups. **You need to be 13+ to create an account**, however, no age verification takes place when you set up an account.

What is Houseparty?

It allows you to video chat with other users (your connections) as well as play in app quizzes and games with each other, it's designed to feel like a house party. Up to 8 people can join each room and you can join several rooms at any one time by swiping across.

How to lock rooms:

Once you are in a video chat (room), your connections and their connections can join the same video chat session regardless of whether you invite them or not **unless** you lock the room. So, if you do not lock the room, then a friend of one of your friends can join that video session. If somebody that isn't your connection is about to join, then you will receive a notice that they are joining the session. We would recommend locking the room by simply tapping on the padlock at the bottom of the screen once everybody that you want is in the room/has joined the session.

If you enable privacy mode, then every room you go into will automatically be locked.

Reporting

As with all apps, it's important that your child knows how to use the reporting tools within it. You can report direct to Houseparty if you see any inappropriate behaviour by tapping their name, then tap the "Friends" button and choose "Report" or "Report or Block". Ensure your child knows how to un-friend or block a person as well.

What you need to be aware of

- **In-app purchases:** One feature of Houseparty is the ability to play games and quizzes with your friends. These can be chargeable.
- **Content:** Other users may take screenshots/recordings of your private chats without you even realising and there is also the potential to see inappropriate content.
- **Strangers:** your child may encounter people they don't know (friends of friends).

Further information

- <https://houseparty.com/guidelines/>
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/houseparty/>

Nintendo Switch

Did you know there is a free Parental Controls app that you can download to your phone to link to your child's Nintendo Switch? You will need to set up a Nintendo account first to use it but then you can:

- view a report to see what video games your child has been playing
- see how long your child has been playing for and set time limits and what time they can play.
- set which games can be played based on their age rating.
- limit in game communication.
- restrict purchases in the Nintendo eShop.



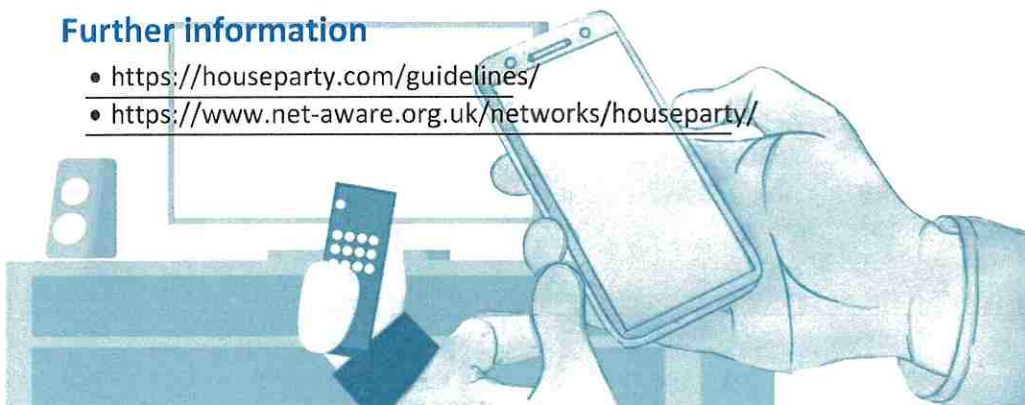
Further information

- <https://www.nintendo.com/switch/parental-controls/>
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/nintendo-switch/>

What is screen time?

It is the amount of time that we spend on a phone, computer, watching television or on a games console. Often, we worry about how much screen time our children are having and unfortunately, there is a lack of research to determine how much screen time our children should have. Following guidance released in 2019 by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), Professor Russell Viner, President of RCPCH suggests:

"that parents make decisions about screen time based on their child's development and health, and whether they are getting enough exercise and sleep. It remains a question of balance as it is when screen use gets in the way or restricts other activities that a child's well-being can be negatively impacted."

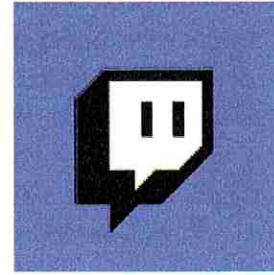


Twitter and Twitch

What is a Twitch?

Twitch is an interactive video live streaming service that focuses on video game live streaming, including broadcasts of esports competitions, in addition to offering music broadcasts, creative content, and "in real life" streams. Twitch users can watch anything from video games, to music festivals, professional sports, and tv shows.

The Twitch app is free to download, and streams are free to watch. Twitch users can also purchase an in-app currency called Bits, which allows them to send Cheers to a streamer as a way of showing support.



What should I be worried about?

Twitch users have the ability to create their own content or they can enjoy Twitch as viewers, tuning into their favorite live streamers and channels. For those interested in live streaming, anyone is able to go live and can start making money from their viewership through Twitch's affiliate program.

Due to its exploding popularity among younger audiences and young gamers, Twitch is definitely a platform that parents will want to pay attention to. When it comes to concerns on the streaming platform, there's a few to consider as it can leave children vulnerable to inappropriate content and online predators.

- **LIVE STREAMING** - Whenever live streaming is involved, parents should be cautious as the content isn't edited and anything could happen. Unfiltered language, inappropriate imagery and more could be shown as there is no delay between what is happening live and what your child is shown on screen. Spam, scams, violent, obscene, and sexual content are all prohibited in Twitch's community guidelines but this doesn't mean that it doesn't happen.
- **TWITCH CHAT MODERATION** - Twitch's chat feature can become chaotic and almost useless on more popular streams with higher viewership, as everyone is typing at the same time in an effort to interact with their favorite streamers. Because these chats get so out of hand on bigger channels, it often becomes a yelling contest filled with cyberbullying, hate speech, and more. When this happens, the moderators on Twitch can't keep up with the overloaded chat and many of the commenters go unpunished. Seeing as these chats aren't perfectly moderated, parents should be able to judge whether their child is ready for this platform or perhaps consider co-viewing with their child.
- **DIRECT MESSAGING** - Twitch also offers direct messaging, a private conversation between two users, and whispers. Twitch whispers are a way for users to interact privately in a public group chat. By typing "/w" into a chat, followed by the username that you want to communicate privately with, only that user will see your message in the group chat.

Further information

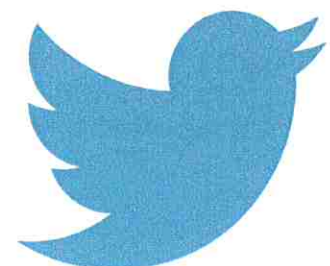
<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/register/purchase?purchasing-type=Resource&purchasing-slug=twitch-online-safety-guide-for-parents>

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-twitch>

Being safe on Twitter (or X as we are now supposed to call it)

You probably know all about Twitter and may well be a user. Occasionally this is used as a vehicle for online bullying and Trolling. This helpful information from Internet Matters will help you with parental settings should your children use Twitter too.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/twitter/>



Harmful online challenges/hoaxes

“A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful. The internet and social media provide a perfect platform for hoaxes, especially hoaxes about challenges or trends that are said to be harmful to children and young people to be spread quickly. You should carefully consider if a challenge or scare story is a hoax. Generally speaking, naming an online hoax and providing direct warnings is not helpful. Concerns are often fuelled by unhelpful publicity, usually generated on social media, and may not be based on confirmed or factual occurrences or any real risk to children and young people.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes> [Accessed 15.3.21].

Whilst we do not recommend talking to your child about specific challenges (it draws attention to them), we do recommend talking to your child about challenges that may appear on the internet. Make sure they know that they should talk to you about what they see online, particularly if it scares or upsets them as you can help them to block and report the content.



Reassure your child that challenges that suggest that bad stuff will happen if they don't complete the tasks are not real.

The following links will provide you with further information as well as content to help you talk to your child:

- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/theres-a-viral-scare-online-what-should-i-do/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/online-challenges-and-peer-pressure>
- <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/its-personal/when-you-see-something-scary-online>
- <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/dont-panic/what-to-do-if-you-see-something-upsetting-online>
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/how-can-we-teach-kids-to-spot-fake-news-online/>

We hope that you have found this guide helpful in understanding the many risks associated with the online world and that you now know where to source support and guidance.

Should you experience anything which concerns you regarding your child's online experiences please let us know. Equally if you become aware of new and emerging software or technology that might present risks to children at the school we'd also love to know about it. We are keen to update this advice regularly and your support in keeping on top of what children may experience is key to this.

Hollie Guard App

The Hollie Guard app allows you to keep an eye on your child while they are traveling using the Journey feature so whenever they use this feature, their emergency contacts are informed when they have arrived at their destination.

Users can also use this app to get help quickly if they're in danger. If a user is in danger, they shake or tap their phone, which activates Hollie Guard and automatically sends their location to their designated contacts.

It can also activate a high-pitched alarm. Visit their website for further information: <https://hollieguard.com/>

Have you checked the age ratings?

When your children request to use a new app or game, it's important to evaluate whether it is appropriate for your child to use it. One of the **first things** we can do is check the age rating. If your child is not old enough then explain to your child, why it is not appropriate for them.

Spotify Kids



Spotify Kids is available as part of a *paid for* Premium family subscription. With Spotify Kids, your child will have their own account to access child-friendly content (picked by Spotify).

You can also share playlists with them - remember that if this playlist includes songs marked explicit (marked with an E) then your child will be able to listen to them. Further information is available here:

<https://support.spotify.com/us/article/spotify-kids/>



Early Years

Is your child online? It's important that devices are set up with age-appropriate parental controls and access is restricted to appropriate apps/content. **We would advise that children only access devices when you are with them.** Sometimes, regardless of what controls we have in place, children may accidentally view inappropriate content so it's important we are around to help them if they do.

The Australian eSafety Commissioner has published a short booklet including advice and guidance on how to navigate the online world with your child. This might seem a strange choice but it has specifically been aimed at parents/carers with children under the age of 5: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/children-under-5/online-safety-for-under-5s-booklet>



Personalised Digital Toolkit

Answer some simple questions and get age specific advice and recommendations:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-family->

Roblox

Roblox – updated PEGI rating

PEGI have announced a change to the age rating for Roblox. PEGI used to rate Roblox as 7+, however because of the huge level of user generated content within Roblox, PEGI have changed the rating to a Parental Guidance label (icon shown right). You can read more about this change here:

<https://pegi.info/news/pegi-changes-rating-advice-roblox>



What is Roblox?

You can either use Roblox to create games or play games that other users have created. **As a lot of the content is user generated, it may mean not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play. It is important to set up Parental controls appropriate to your child.**

Allowed Experiences - NEW

Roblox has introduced Allowed Experiences, which allows you to select age-appropriate experiences, so your child can only join experiences that match their age set. Please note that experiences above the age restriction set may be seen in search results. Age categories available are 9+, 13+ and all ages.

You can find out how to set up Allowed Experiences here:

<https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/8863284850196-Allowed-Experiences-Controls>

What should I be aware of?

Chat Facility - Players can chat to each other on Roblox. You can add parental controls to turn this feature off completely or add restrictions.

Virtual Currency - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories. If you do not want your child to purchase them, then ensure you set the Monthly Spend Restriction to zero.

Game content – as mentioned, games are created by different users so sometimes the content may not be appropriate for your child.

Blocking users and reporting – ensure your child knows how to do this.

What should I do?

- Play the game with your child.
- Explore the parental controls within Roblox and set as appropriate.
- Show your child how to use the Report Abuse system within Roblox to report inappropriate content and how to block other users.

Further information:

- <https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>
- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/roblox>



Livestreams

Broadband set up

Have you set up appropriate settings on your broadband/Wi-Fi? Most broadband providers include parental controls for free as part of their broadband package, which means that any device that connects to your Wi-Fi will be protected by any controls you set up. Find out how to set yours up here:

Sky:

<https://www.sky.com/help/diagnostic/sky-broadband-buddy/sky-broadband-buddy>

BT:

<https://www.bt.com/help/security/how-to-keep-your-family-safe-online-with-bt-parental-controls-an>

Talk Talk:

<https://community.talktalk.co.uk/t5/Keping-your-Family-Safe/bd-p/kfshub>

Virgin:

<https://www.virginmedia.com/broadband/parental-control>

Remember, children may have devices that use mobile data, so they won't always be connected to your wifi. Ensure you set up parental controls on these devices too.

Further information:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parental-controls-offered-by-your-home-internet-provider>

Test Your Internet Filter

WGfL have created a tool to test our filtering to give you an indication that your broadband is blocking certain categories. Access it here: <http://testfiltering.com/>

Does your child watch livestreams?

What is livestreaming?

Livestreaming is when an individual broadcasts video live over the internet. People can watch livestreams from any device that is connected to the internet.

Who is watching livestreaming?

Research from Ofcom reported that 57% of 3 – 17 year olds have watched live streams and the most used platforms to watch live streams were YouTube and TikTok. The research also showed that the percentage watching content on livestreaming app/sites increased by age. A third of 3-4 year olds were watching live content with this number growing to eight in ten of 16-17 year olds. This is reported in [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#).



What are the risks?

There are risks associated with watching livestreams that you should be aware of. The main risk being that your child may see or hear something inappropriate as your child may come across themes or content that is not suitable for them. It is difficult to moderate live content as it is happening in real time.

How can I help my child?

- All online platforms have an age rating, ensure your child only accesses platforms that are appropriate to their age. For example, TikTok has an age rating of 13.
- For any platforms that your child uses, ensure appropriate parental controls and privacy settings are applied.
- Take an interest in what your child is doing online and on a regular basis, ask your child to show you what they are accessing.
- Ensure your child knows how to use any reporting/blocking tools on the app that they are using and as always please ensure that your child knows to talk to a trusted adult if they see anything that concerns them online.

Further information

- <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/livestreaming-parents/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/what-is-live-streaming/>

Be kind online



It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they are speaking to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect and kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face.

Dr Linda Papadopoulos (Internet Matters Ambassador) provides tips on how you can help your child to be kind online in this

YouTube video such as teaching them how to be inclusive and think about how they would like to be treated online themselves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q&t=9s>

Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages (or see something that worries them) then they should not reply or engage in conversation with them, but that they should tell a trusted adult. You can use the tools within an app to report any offensive or hurtful content as well as block people so they cannot contact you again in the future.

Unicef have a comprehensive area on their website, which talks about what Cyberbullying is and how to stop it:

<https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>

Childline also have a lot of information about Cyberbullying, including advice to those that might be bullying:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>

How can the law help me?

Whilst we wait for the Online Safety Bill to be passed, which will hopefully improve Online Safety, there are certain laws already established to help protect us online. For example, in the UK we have the Malicious Communications Act 1988 that states it is an offence to send a communication that conveys an indecent or grossly offensive message or a threat. We also have the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which covers threatening behaviour or harassment online.

Report Harmful Content have curated a list of laws that are relevant to online behaviour here:

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/when-should-you-go-to-the-police/>



Online Safety with Google

As part of Google Families, Google have a hub of resources that you can use including conversation starters with links to additional tools and advice and information about parental controls. Google also provide you with resources to help your children build healthier habits and stay safe online. There is also a selection of ideas on how to use technology as a family in a fun and engaging manner such as exploring the world and learning how to code. You can access the hub here:

https://families.google/intl/en_uk/



CEOP: Updated 4-7s website and guide

This updated website from CEOP Education is designed for children to visit with their parents/carers. The children answer a series of questions as they work towards collecting badges. You can find out more here:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/4-7s-website/>

Screen time advice

We're often asked how long children should spend on their devices each day. Childnet have created a blog discussing why it is difficult to specify a limit and what you should consider. You can read it here:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/screen-time-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>

Fall Guys

Fall Guys is a free, online multiplayer game in which players team up to take on obstacle courses and puzzles to try and be the last player standing. Fall Guys is available on multiple platforms.

Whilst this game has a PEGI rating of 3 (suitable for all ages), you need to be aware that up to sixty people will be playing in one game at the same time and it does have the option of **voice chat** and **in-game purchases**. Voice chat is off by default and is not needed to play the game. An Epic Games account is required to play Fall Guys, which does include parental controls. You can find out more here:

<https://www.epicgames.com/site/en-US/parental-controls>

Instagram: new features

You must be at least 13 years old to have an Instagram account.

Instagram have introduced several new features, including 'Quiet mode,' how to hide content as well as additional tools to help your child.

Quiet mode

This gives users the ability to put their account in quiet mode, so you do not receive notifications and if you receive a DM, the sender receives an auto reply. This mode will help provide less distraction whilst studying and at nighttime.

Recommendations

You can now hide content in Explore that you do not wish to see/are not interested in. Instagram will use this information to avoid showing you that type of content in other areas where content is recommended as well.

Hidden words

You can already hide comments and DMs containing specific words, but this feature has now been expanded to recommended posts. If you add a word, emoji or hashtag that you want to avoid to your hidden words (in privacy settings) then Instagram will try to no longer recommend content with those words in the caption/ hashtag.

Updated Parental Supervision Tools

You can see your child's Instagram settings (if you have set up a supervised account), including their privacy and account settings and accounts your child has blocked. If your child updates a setting, then you will receive a notification to inform you.

Find out more

You can read more about the new features here:

<https://about.fb.com/news/2023/01/instagram-quiet-mode-manage-your-time-and-focus/>



Sky Broadband Shield

Do you have Sky Broadband? Sky offer a set of free tools to all customers to help make the internet a safer place for your family, for example safe search. You can find out more about the settings available and how to set it up here:

<https://www.sky.com/help/articles/sky-broadband-shield-start>

Spotify

There have been news reports claiming grooming has taken place on Spotify (source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-64262918>).

Spotify is a music streaming service. You should be over 18 years of age to agree to the terms, or if older than 13, obtain parent/guardian consent.

There is a Spotify Kids version, but it is only available as part of a Premium (paid for) Family plan.

Spotify have produced this Parental Guide to assist you with further information but if your child does use Spotify then it may be beneficial to have a chat about what they are viewing. https://www.spotify.com/privacy/files/Parental_Guide.pdf

You can find out more about Grooming and who to contact here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/>

Is your child playing Gacha Life?

Gacha Life is rated as 9+ on the App Store and for 'Everyone' on the Google Play Store. Players can dress up characters and add props (including weapons) and create scenes with their characters as well as play games. The app does allow in-app purchases ranging from £1.70 to £17.99 and does include adverts. This article from Internet Matters provides further information and discusses in detail what you need to be aware of:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub-esafety-news/what-is-gacha-life-what-parents-need-to-know/>

Social Media Influencers

Rec Room

Rec Room is available across different platforms and is free to play. It can be played with or without a VR headset. Rec room consists of player created rooms, in which players can play games and interact with others.

Rec Room is rated as 9+ by the App store. For players under 13 years of age, they are assigned a junior account. When creating a junior account, you can also add your own email address, which will allow you to manage your child's password and other settings such as in app purchases. Users with a junior account will not be able to message each other.

You should be aware of the following if your child is playing Rec Room:

- In app purchases: make sure your bank account details are not linked to the device your child is playing on.
- Chat: if your child does not have a junior account then there is a chat facility within Rec Room so there is a risk that your child could communicate with strangers.
- Inappropriate content: your child may come across themes or content that is not appropriate for your child.

Rec Room does have reporting facilities so if your child is playing Rec Room, then please ensure they know how to use them and to talk to a trusted adult if they see anything that concerns them.

You can find out more about Rec Room here:

<https://recroom.com/parents-guide>

What is an Influencer?

An influencer is somebody prominent on a social media platform such as YouTube and Instagram, who have a high number of followers. Influencers share their opinions/ideas and may be paid to advertise/promote products through their account. Whilst there are some great influencers, there are some that choose to share their own opinions, which could be misogynistic or racist for example. These opinions can be expressed or interpreted as fact. It is important to talk to your child about the spread of misinformation online and how we should fact check and critically analyse what we see and hear online.

What we see on social media platforms is influenced by algorithms, which predict what type of content we are most likely to interact with. Whilst there are benefits of algorithms, it can mean that once we start looking at certain content, our social media feed can become more aligned with that opinion, so we don't see a balanced picture. You can find out more here: <https://www.childnet.com/blog/algorithms/>

Further information

The NSPCC have created an article detailing what you need to know about online influencers. You can read it here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/2023-05-16-the-influence-of-influencers/>

HiPal – Walkie Talkie



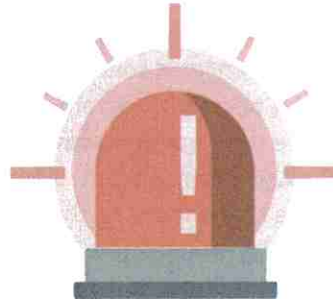
HiPal – Walkie Talkie is a social media app and rated 12+ on the App store and for 'Teens' on Google Play.

When first accessing HiPal, it asks you if you are under or over 12 years of age. The area available to under 12 year olds states that no stranger interaction can take place. Users with this account type invite friends by sharing a code/QR code. As with all messaging apps, there can be instances of cyberbullying, so it is important to monitor who your child is interacting with.

If a user selects that they are over 12 years of age, then there is the risk of communication from strangers. HiPal features a public square where you can message strangers as well as an explore tab where you can view people's images and videos from around the world. There is a risk of viewing content that is not suitable or inappropriate. There are reporting and blocking features within the app. You can find out more from Safer Schools NI here: <https://saferschoolsni.co.uk/hipal-walkie-talkie-and-wizz-social-apps/>

Omegle

Omegle have updated their terms and conditions. You must be 18+ to use Omegle. Omegle is a social networking/chat website that **connects two strangers** together for either a text or a video chat. Chats are anonymous unless a user provides this information.



Omegle should not be accessed by children due to the potential imagery shared and language used which can be explicit.

What should I be aware of?

- No registration is required to access Omegle (therefore no age verification) and there are no reporting facilities.
- Users are given an option to save the chat's log and share the link. It is also possible for other users to take screenshots of text and video chats.

You can find out more information from Internet Matters, including imitation apps that you should also be aware of:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/what-is-omegle-what-parents-need-to-know/>

JusTalk

Users can use this app to video chat, call and text. There are two versions – JusTalk and JusTalk Kids with both versions having the option to unlock further functions via a premium subscription. **JusTalk is rated as 12+ and JusTalk Kids is rated as 4+ on the App store. Even though the apps may be rated as age appropriate for your child, there are still risks in using either version, such as in app purchases.**

The Ineqe Safeguarding Group provide an overview of JusTalk, including the risks you need to be aware of: <https://ineqe.com/2023/02/08/what-is-the-justalk-app/>

Free Webinar

London Grid for Learning (LgFL) are working with the Early Years Alliance to deliver a 1-hour webinar on Thursday 8th June 10-11am to parents of children aged 0-5 years, about simple steps to take to keep children safe when using online devices. You can find out more at the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/family-connect-screens-in-the-early-years-tickets-633434709267>

Money Savvy Online



Have you been scammed online?

As scammers become more sophisticated, it's important that we learn about the different approaches that they might use and what to look out for so we can protect ourselves. Barclays have listed some of the most common scams on their website:

<https://www.barclays.co.uk/fraud-and-scams/scams-protection/>

MoneySense from NatWest

NatWest have an area on their website full of useful articles and guidance to support your child and enhance your understanding. Articles include avoiding fraud and online scams, information on digital game currency, the dangers of fraud and do you know what a money mule is?

The site also includes activities to complete with your child to enhance their understanding of money including a 'savings challenge' for ages 5 – 8 and 'money and your mental health' aimed at young adults. You can find this information and lots more here:

<https://natwest.mymoneysense.com/parents/>

What is artificial intelligence (AI)?

AI is when a computer/machine can learn and perform tasks like a human. Its popularity is increasing due to the likes of ChatGPT and more recently, My AI from Snapchat. Internet Matters have created a guide about using AI with your child and lists some popular AI tools that you should be aware of: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/parent-guide-to-artificial-intelligence-ai-tools/>

In addition, Childnet have produced this blog about Snapchat's My AI: <https://www.childnet.com/blog/snapchat-ats-new-ai-chatbot-and-its-impact-on-young-people/>

Playing games online

Does your child play games online? We have outlined some points that you may wish to consider to try and create a safer experience for your child.

Have you set up parental controls?

As well as setting up appropriate parental controls through the game's setting, ensure you have set them up on the console/device your child is playing on. For example, many consoles allow you to restrict the games accessed by age.



Chatting to strangers

Some games will allow communication, for example (FIFA and Fortnite). Depending on the game, this may be via the in-game text chat, direct messages or talking through headphones. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off or restrict bad language so make sure settings appropriate to your child are set up for each of the games they play.

It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players who make them feel uncomfortable and that they know to talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns. It can also be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they would not if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they are speaking to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect, like they would if they were face-to-face.

Is the game age appropriate?

Before buying the game, check that your child is old enough to play it. All games will either have a PEGI rating or be rated by the App Store /Google Play. UK Safer Internet Centre have published a blog, which shares tips on what to do if your child asks about playing a new game:

- <https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/help-my-child-wants-to-play-games-that-are-too-old-for-them-2>

In app purchases

In addition to the above, you should be aware of in app purchases as lots of games include the option to purchase additional items/subscriptions so ensure you do not have payment cards saved or set up restrictions/pin code to approve.

Further information

The NSPCC provide further guidance and support regarding this topic:

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-games/>

Skill-building app suggestions from Internet Matters

Internet Matters have curated a list of apps that will help your child to develop skills and new interests in different areas, for example Game Builder Garage (7+), which helps children to create their own games and Tayasui Sketches to develop art skills. You can find the full list here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/skill-building-apps-guide-for-kids/>

Scary Teacher 3D

Scary Teacher 3D is a game rated as 12+ by the App store (due to Mild Realistic Violence) or as 'Teen' on Google Play (due to violence). The game does include in-app purchases as well. Players must scare their teacher by completing different activities. There are lots of videos of this game on YouTube as well.

As with all games your child is asking to play, please take note of the age rating and play the game first to see if you think it is appropriate for your child.

Teaching children about money

Lloyds bank have published information and resources to help us help our children develop good financial habits. The information is split into age groups so you can find support tailored to your child's age. You can find out more here:

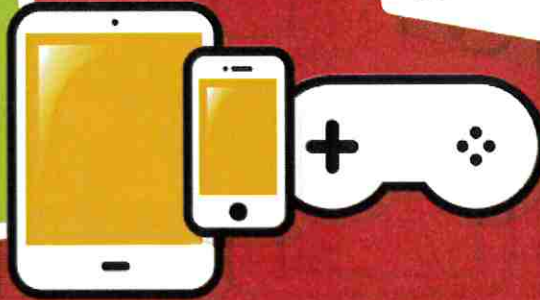
<https://www.lloydsbank.com/help-guidance/family-finances/teaching-children-about-money.html>

Stay Smart

As a school we believe in following the SMART code for being safe online. The poster below will explain what they means.



BE SMART ONLINE



S

SAFE

Keep your personal information safe. When chatting or posting online don't give away things like your full name, password or home address. Remember personal information can be seen in images and videos you share too. Keep them safe to keep yourself safe.



M

MEET

Meeting up with someone you only know online, even a friend of a friend, can be dangerous as this person is still a stranger. If someone you only know online ever asks you to meet up, for personal information or for photos/videos of you then tell an adult straight away and report them together on www.thinkuknow.co.uk

THINK
U
KNOW

A

ACCEPTING

Think carefully before you click on or open something online (e.g. links, adverts, friend requests, photos) as you never know where they may lead to or they may contain viruses. Do not accept something if you are unsure of who the person is or what they've sent you.



R

RELIABLE

You cannot trust everything you see online as some things can be out of date, inaccurate or not entirely true. To find reliable information compare at least three different websites, check in books and talk to someone about what you have found.



T

TELL

Tell a trusted adult if something or someone ever makes you feel upset, worried or confused. This could be if you or someone you know is being bullied online. There are lots of people who will be able to help you like your teachers, parents, carers or contact Childline - 0800 11 11 or www.childline.org.uk



BE SMART WITH A HEART

Remember to always be smart with a heart by being kind and respectful to others online. Make the internet a better place by helping your friends if they are worried or upset by anything that happens online.

