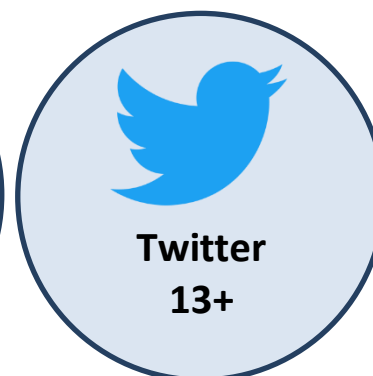
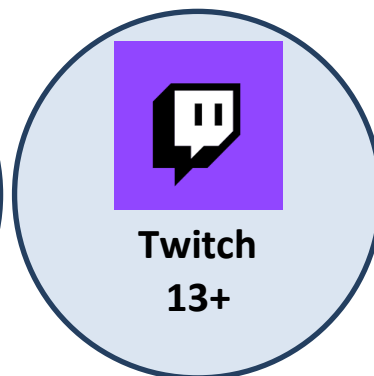


Dear Parents and Carers,

This online safety guide is intended to provide a guide for parents to the various online services that your children might at some point be exposed to. Although many of these platforms are designed for older children (often over 13) they are also in the social consciousness of many KS2 children and used by many of them too. This guide will hopefully help parents in understanding these platforms and help their children stay safe on them. They will also be of interest to parents of younger children too, who may soon discover the online world. We've also included other advice and helpful links for parents regarding broader themes of online safety. We hope that you find this a helpful resource which we intend to update regularly with any new emerging issues and services that may be of interest to you.

Social Media Apps

What age should my child be to use these apps?



What risks are there of my child using these apps?

Whilst there are benefits to being online, there are risks too regardless of your child's age. Risks include your child viewing inappropriate content, sharing personal information, cyberbullying and grooming.

Reporting functions

If your child is using any of the above apps then make sure you show them how to use the reporting facilities within each app and ensure your child knows that they must tell you or another trusted adult if they see anything upsetting online. Use the apps together and explore the different security and privacy settings.

Further information

Is your child too young to use the above apps but is still asking you if they can join social media? Then you could suggest an alternative option. Internet Matters list several apps that have been created for younger children, they are grouped for ages 6 – 10 and ages 11 – 13:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/social-media-networks-made-for-kids/>

Net Aware provide further information about the most popular apps, games and social media sites:

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

Your child's online life

There is so much that we can do online nowadays including playing games, chatting with others, watching TV or sharing our videos/photographs. Being online can be great but it's important that we set boundaries for our children to keep them safe whilst they explore being online, develop their digital resilience and understanding of what to do if anything negative happens when online.



So how can we help keep our children safe? We can start by checking age restrictions/ratings. **It's important that we follow these to ensure that what our children are doing or seeing online is appropriate for their age.**

Where can I find age ratings?

- **Films:** The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) rate films. This page includes a link to a 'Parents' Guide to Age Ratings': <https://www.cbbfc.co.uk/resources/viewing-films-safely-online>.
- **Video games:** PEGI provides age classifications for video games. PEGI **considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.** It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration user generated content within games (such as on Roblox) and the chat facilities within games.
- **Apps:** Check the individual age ratings within the relevant app store. We also recommend that you download any apps and play them yourself to check their suitability.
- **Social Media networks:** All social media networks have a minimum age rating; they are all at least 13+.

What else can I do?

- Explain the importance of age ratings to your child.
- Go online together and let your child show you what they are accessing online.
- Set up parental controls on your broadband, devices, consoles and on any individual apps that your child is using. This will reduce the chances of them accessing anything unsuitable as well as viewing inappropriate content for example whilst on YouTube.
- Chat to your child regularly about what they are doing online and as always, remind your child that if anything is worrying them about what they see online then they should tell you or another trusted adult.

What if my child has seen something inappropriate?

This is a useful article from Thinkuknow explaining what to do and who to contact if you have any concerns:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/what-to-do-if-your-child-has-seen-something-inappropriate-online/>

NSPCC launches new book

The NSPCC has launched a new children's book called Pantosaurus and the Power of PANTS. This book will help families have simple conversations to help keep children safe from abuse. The book is available for £6.99 with all proceeds going to NSPCC. More information available here:

<https://shop.nspcc.org.uk/products/pantos>

Has your child just got their first phone?

EE have launched PhoneSmart Licence, which is a course to help prepare children for their new phone by teaching them how to stay safe and be kind online. PhoneSmart is free and available to everyone, not just EE customers.

Your child will have to complete 5 sections and as they complete each episode, they will be rewarded with a sticker. Once they have collected all 5, they will be given their PhoneSmart Licence.

The site also includes several useful articles to support you, for example what to do when buying their phone, information about parental controls and where to go for further advice. Follow the link below to access:

<https://eephonesmart.co.uk/>



Being online

If your child is online (for example playing games, using Snapchat, Instagram etc), then it's important that we talk to our child about **being kind online**, for example only posting positive comments, don't say anything they wouldn't say in real life and treat others as they would expect to be treated.



Your child also needs to be aware that what they see online isn't always the full picture. People only share what they want you to see and images are often filtered. It is also important that your child knows how to block and report any inappropriate behaviour when they see it.

BBC Own It have curated a collection of videos, quizzes, and tips to help make the web a kinder place:
<https://www.bbc.com/ownit/curations/being-kind-online>



Further information

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/feeling-good-on-social-media/>

Yubo Social networking

Yubo is a social network, you must be over 13 years of age to join **although the App store rate it as 17+**. Those aged 13 to 18 years old must have parental permission and will join a separate Yubo community that is only for under-18s.

You make 'friends' by swiping right on someone's profile picture and if they do the same on yours then you can chat with them or stream live videos. **Due to the nature of this app, your child may come across content that is not appropriate to them.** Ensure your child knows how to use the app's reporting facilities.

If you follow the app store rating, then really children should not be accessing this app but Yubo have created the following guides to help make it a safer environment for your child. We really would recommend reading them before you allow your child to access this app. If you don't think this app is appropriate for your child, then talk to them and tell them why and what your concerns are.

Guide for Parents: <http://parents-guide.yubo.live/>

Guide for Teens: <http://teens.yubo.live/>

Further information

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

What is your child playing online?

Is your child playing/viewing games through Twitch, Steam, Roblox etc? If so, they may be viewing inappropriate content, for example watching and playing horror survival games. **Make sure that what your child is accessing is age appropriate.**

Find my phone

You might choose to set this up on your phone (and for your child) so you can share your location and find out where they are? Talk to your child about why you are setting this up and when and why you will check their location. Find out more using the links below.

Apple:

<https://www.apple.com/uk/icloud/find-my/> or use this link if you have Family Sharing set up:
<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201087>

Android:

<https://support.google.com/android/answer/3265955#zippy=%2Cstep-check-that-find-my-device-is-on> or use this link if you have Family Link set up: <https://support.google.com/families/answer/7103413?hl=en>

Don't share passwords

Does your child understand that they should not share their passwords with others? The risks include the other user viewing personal information about your child, they could take control of your child's account by changing the password and then use the account inappropriately or they could spend money from your child's account.

Learn more here:

<https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/new-online-accounts/how-can-i-keep-my-account-secure/>

Gaming – has your child been offered gifts?

It has been known for offenders to gift children items (such as loot boxes) whilst playing online games. They may do this to develop trust and a relationship with your child. **This can be part of the grooming process.** Thinkuknow offer further guidance:

- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/in-game-chat/>

Discord - Have you heard of it?

Broadband controls

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/diagnostics/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/Keeping-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 internet so ensure you set up parental controls on those devices too.

Further information:

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



Discord

Discord is a relatively new social networking app that is used by gamers to **chat to each other**.

There can be in app purchases through Discord's premium subscription service. The minimum age to access Discord is 13. The Apple App store rates it as 17+.



How does it work?

Discord is made up of servers, which are spaces for groups to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anybody can set up a server and they can either be public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or groups.

How can I make it safer?

Discord have created this article, which outlines four steps to creating a safer account, including how to block users.

<https://discord.com/safety/360043857751-Four-steps-to-a-super-safe-account>

How is it linked to other games?

Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat about the game (**rather than the game's own chat facility**).

What do I need to be aware of?

We always encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use different apps/websites and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. It's important to be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered. Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord as well as inappropriate language. Discord have produced this article, which answers common questions:

- <https://discord.com/safety/360044149591-Answering-parents'-and-educators'-top-questions>

Further information

- Discord app safety – What parents need to know:
<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/parents-guide-to-discord-on-how-your-kids-can-use-it-safely/>
- <https://discord.com/safety>

In-game spending tips

Internet Matters and Barclays Digital Eagles have created this 30 second YouTube video to support you in talking to your child about in-game spending. Watch it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_060J59YKBI&list=PLJSbhHkqYnrSHEmsr_8jwYk7pdJsoHZQcR

Snapchat

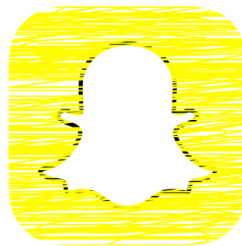
What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is an app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. **You must be 13+ to sign up.**

How does it work?

Users can send messages (snaps) to others that can only be seen for a set time period e.g. 10 seconds.

Users can also upload snaps to stories which then disappear after 24 hours.



What should I be aware of?

- **Who is your child friends with** – talk to your child about who they are friends with and why it is safer to be friends with only those they know in real life.
- **Group chats** - in a group chat there may be people that they're not friends with on the app who can then communicate with them in the group. This also increases their risk of interacting with strangers.
- **Snap Map** - The map lets users see where 'friends' are. Location sharing via the map is optional and is off by default (we recommend that it remains off).
- **Snapchat streaks** - Streaks count how many consecutive days two people have been sending Snaps to each other, this can increase pressure to respond daily.
- **Inappropriate content** – due to the nature of the app your child may come across content that is inappropriate.
- **Screenshots** – whilst Snaps disappear, users may take screenshots before they do, potentially resulting in them losing control of what they have shared as it could be sent to other people.
- **Bullying** – there is a risk of bullying on all platforms so please ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.
 - <https://snap.com/safety/safety-reporting/>
 - <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/a/remove-block-friends>

Safety tips

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and make sure that they know that they should always talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns. **Please make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up and your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.** We would recommend you explore Snapchat with your child and suggest why certain options are safer, for example, setting your account so only friends (rather than everyone) can see your content and only those you are friends with can contact you.

- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2>

Further information

- Parents' Ultimate Guide to Snapchat: <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-snapchat>
- <https://snap.com/en-GB/safety/safety-center>

Snapchat
Safety Centre:
<https://snap.com/en-GB/safety/safety-center>



Creating strong passwords

We need to create passwords for everything these days and it's important that our children not only understand that they shouldn't share passwords with others but also that they know how to create a 'strong' password to keep their information safe. Learn more here:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/how-to-create-strong-passwords-online/>



Monkey (rated 18+)

This is a website and app (available only on Google Play) that allows users to make video calls to strangers. This is a very concerning app/website which has highly inappropriate content on it. The following link provides further information about it:

<https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2021/07/06/safeguarding-alert-monkey-web/>

We recommend not talking about this app/website by name with your child, so it doesn't lead to your child searching for it out of interest. Instead, talk to your child about what they are doing online and if they have any concerns.

What if someone else posts a photo of your child on social media?

What can you do if somebody posts a photo of your child on social media? The UK Safer Internet Centre explores this question:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/help-%E2%80%93-someone-else-has-posted-photo-my-child-social-media>

Smart TV / Streaming services

There are so many TV streaming services available now such as Netflix, Prime, Apple TV, Now TV and Disney as well as more families having Smart TVs, which connect to the internet and allow you to download apps and access YouTube for example. This means our children potentially have access to a lot more content, some of which may not always be appropriate to watch.

If your child does access content through these services then, as always, make sure you set parental controls so they can only view content that is suitable for their age.

Each service will have their own parental control settings with most of them using a Parental PIN so you can restrict what can be viewed (and purchased in some cases).



SEND Online Safety Hub

Net Aware have worked with Ambitious about Autism to create a hub featuring online safety tips, advice and activities for parents/carers of children with SEND.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/send-online-safety-hub/>

TikTok

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok.

Users can watch musical clips, record clips (it includes lots of lip synching and dancing), edit them and add special effects.

Why should I be concerned?

You need to be aware that some of the videos may contain explicit language and sexual imagery, which may not be suitable for your child to view. There is also the risk of strangers contacting your child so make sure you have set up the appropriate settings.

If your child is using TikTok then we recommend setting the account as private (this is the default setting for users under 16 since Jan 2021). Even with a private account, your child's profile information such as their photo and bio are still visible so ensure your child understands the importance of not adding personal information (e.g. location, age and phone numbers) to this area. This article explains how you can strengthen your privacy settings and what features are turned off by default for accounts for children aged 13 – 15: <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/strengthening-privacy-and-safety-for-youth>

Family Pairing

This allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's account. This will allow you to set controls such as restricted mode (limit the appearance of inappropriate content) and screen time management (control how long they can spend on TikTok each day). You can find out more here: <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/>

Challenges and Trends

Lots of them are fun and not harmful but sometimes they can be risky. TikTok have produced this resource to help you talk to your child about challenges and the potential risks: <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en-sg/online-challenges/>.

Blocking and Reporting

As with similar apps, there is the ability to report and block other users so ensure your child knows how to use these features:

- <https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/report-a-problem>
- <https://support.tiktok.com/en/using-tiktok/followers-and-following/blocking-the-users>

TikTok have introduced new tools to try and promote kindness on their platform. The new 'Filter All Comments' feature means that you can choose which comments will appear on your videos.

<https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/new-tools-to-promote-kindness>

This article may be of interest too as it outlines three features which you should know about if your child is using TikTok:

<https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/three-tiktok-features-every-parent-should-know>



Fortnite

Is your child playing Fortnite? **It is rated PEGI 12 for frequent mild violence which means it is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age.**

It is important to remember that when rating games, PEGI do not take into consideration the communication features of a game. Fortnite does include a chat facility, which adds further risks.

What is Fortnite?

There are different versions of Fortnite, including a free-to-play Battle Royale game (although money can be spent within the game) where up to 100 players compete against each other.

What do I need to be aware of?

- **Chatting to strangers and inappropriate language:** Fortnite contains voice and text chat. Due to the nature of the game, your child may be chatting to strangers and may hear inappropriate language. Ensure your child knows how to report players for any inappropriate behaviour.
- **In app purchases:** All users can purchase V-Bucks directly through the game. This currency can be used to purchase items in the Fortnite store so make sure you don't store your payment details within the game/device and restrict purchases, as these sums can be large.

Parental Controls

Fortnite includes several parental controls to help you make it a safer environment for your child including disabling voice chat, filtering language and setting privacy settings. Find out more about parental controls here: <https://www.epicgames.com/fortnite/en-US/parental-controls>. **Also, remember to set up age-appropriate parental controls on the device your child is playing on as well.**

Further information

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/fortnite-chapter-2-battle-royale-parental-controls-guide/>

LEGO Build and Talk

LEGO® have created Build and Talk to help you chat to your child about digital safety and wellbeing. Firstly, you pick an activity to do and then you read a story, which includes questions and conversation prompts, whilst they build with their LEGO®. This is a great way to start talking about online safety with your child! <https://www.lego.com/en-gb/sustainability/children/buildandtalk/>

Whilst you're there, view their guides on key topics related to online safety <https://www.lego.com/en-gb/sustainability/children/digital-child-safety/> or play Doom the Gloom with your child, which will support them in using the internet safely: <https://www.lego.com/en-gb/campaigns/kids/doom-the-gloom>.

BBC Own it keyboard and App

Did you know BBC Own It has a keyboard and app? Download the app on your child's phone to access the special keyboard, which will offer advice as they type and intervenes for example, if they're sharing their mobile number, the app will tell your child to 'think safe' before they send the message. Find out more here: <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control/own-it-app>

BBC Own it also has a dedicated area for you with video guides on useful topics such as '*the transition from primary to secondary school*' and '*supporting children with social media apps*' and links to other useful sites. Click below to access:

<https://www.bbc.com/ownit/curations/parents>

Apple Guided Access / Android Screen pinning

Does your child use your phone at times? Both Apple and Android give you the ability to restrict what can be accessed when they are using it, so you can restrict your device to the one app that your child would like to use (so all other features are disabled).

Use the following links to find out how to set it up:

Apple:

<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT202612>

Android:

<https://support.google.com/android/answer/9455138?hl=en-GB>

Parental Controls

Choosing apps

It is difficult to tell you about all the different apps your child may encounter as some are less known, and new ones arrive which we don't know about. So instead we thought we'd provide you with some pointers to help you decide if an app is appropriate or not for your child.

- One starting point would be to look at the age rating – is your child old enough to be playing it? Also please be aware that apps are often rated by the developer themselves.
<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news%2Fage-content-ratings-apps-games/>
- Regardless of the age rating, does the app include any communication options such as chat or commenting? If yes, this can add greater risk and you will need to decide if the app is then appropriate. Try to use the app first so you can check it.
- Use the app with your child, show them any blocking/reporting tools.
- Does the app have any parental controls?
- Read the app reviews – is there anything that concerns you?
- Google the app – is there anything in the news that concerns you?
- Play and use the app together
- Talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online.



Parental controls

This is a little reminder about setting up appropriate parental controls for any new phones, consoles or games your child may have.

Games/consoles

First, check the PEGI rating of any new games to check that your child is old enough to be playing them. PEGI provides age classifications for video games and **considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty**. It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration user generated content within games (such as on Roblox) and the chat facilities within games. Visit PEGI here: <https://pegi.info/>

For any new consoles, it is important to set up appropriate controls such as restricting spending limits and managing who they can communicate with. Follow the links below to find out about Parental Controls for each device:

Nintendo: <https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.html>

PS5: <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/>

Xbox: <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming>

Tablets/Smart phones

As well as setting up parental controls on the device itself, remember to check any apps your child would like on their device, is it suitable for their age and review all settings and privacy options for each one. For the devices, use the available settings to prevent purchases, restrict content viewed and adjust privacy settings. Follow the links below to find out more:

iPhones/iPads: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304>

Google Play: <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738>

Further information

Information, tips and advice on setting up parental controls:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

Disney parental controls

Does your child watch Disney+? If so, have you set up the parental controls to ensure that what your child is watching it, it is appropriate to them? More information is available here:

https://help.disneyplus.com/csp?id=csp_article_content&sys_kb_id=9582efc_bdb1aac50055ceadc13961917



A guide to location settings

Many apps and games now ask users to share their location. It's important that your child understands the risk of location sharing and that you can discuss when it is appropriate to share. You can read more here:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/a-parents-guide-to-location-settings/>

Online Games with chat

Is your child playing games online?

Children can communicate online through lots of different apps, social media and games (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, FIFA, Fortnite for example), so it's important to know what your child is doing online and who they communicate with so you can talk about the potential risks together.



Some games include communication between players, this could 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.



Chatting to strangers

When playing online, your child might be playing games with people they don't know. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players that make them feel uncomfortable and that they know to talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Be kind

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, like they would if they were face-to-face.



Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages (or sees something that worries them) then they should not reply or engage in conversation with the person, but they should instead tell a trusted adult.

Further information

These additional links will provide you with further guidance and support regarding this topic:

- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/talking-to-people-online-when-should-i-be-worried/>
- https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/online-gaming/

Gaming apps with adult themes you should know about

This article also includes tips to help you:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/gaming-apps-with-adult-themes-you-should-know-about/>

Ian Wright shares tips on gaming responsibly

Ian Wright shares his tips on gaming responsibly including playing games with your kids:

<https://youtu.be/pnWionq9C4c>

You can also visit Internet Matter's Online Gaming hub which provides advice on how to keep your family safe:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/online-gaming-advice/>

Helping My Autistic Child Stay Safe Online

The Ann Craft Trust and The Marie Collins Foundation have joined forces to create a resource to help parents and children understand various online risks. The booklet includes information about what online harm is and ways you can effectively help and support your children. Download a copy here:

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/helping-my-autistic-child-stay-safe-online/>

Highly inappropriate content

This page is designed to highlight a few of the current games and programs that we know some children in the school are exposed to. This is not information that should be shared with your children, as with lots of the issues mentioned in this guide to do so would create a mystique about the content that might encourage children to seek them out.

Grand Theft Auto (GTA)



GTA is rated 18+ by PEGI (a couple of versions are rated 16+), this is largely because of bad language, violence, glamourisation of crime and the depiction of drugs. **GTA is not suitable for those under this age. There is also due to be released a new online version which will doubtless be a talking point for older children.**

What do I need to be aware of?

- Mature content
- In game chat
- In game spending – make sure your bank account details are not linked.

Call of Duty Mobile

There is also a mobile version of Call of Duty for Android and iOS devices. Find out more about this version here: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/call-of-duty-mobile/>

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are playing online and make sure that they know that they should always talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns.

What can we play instead?

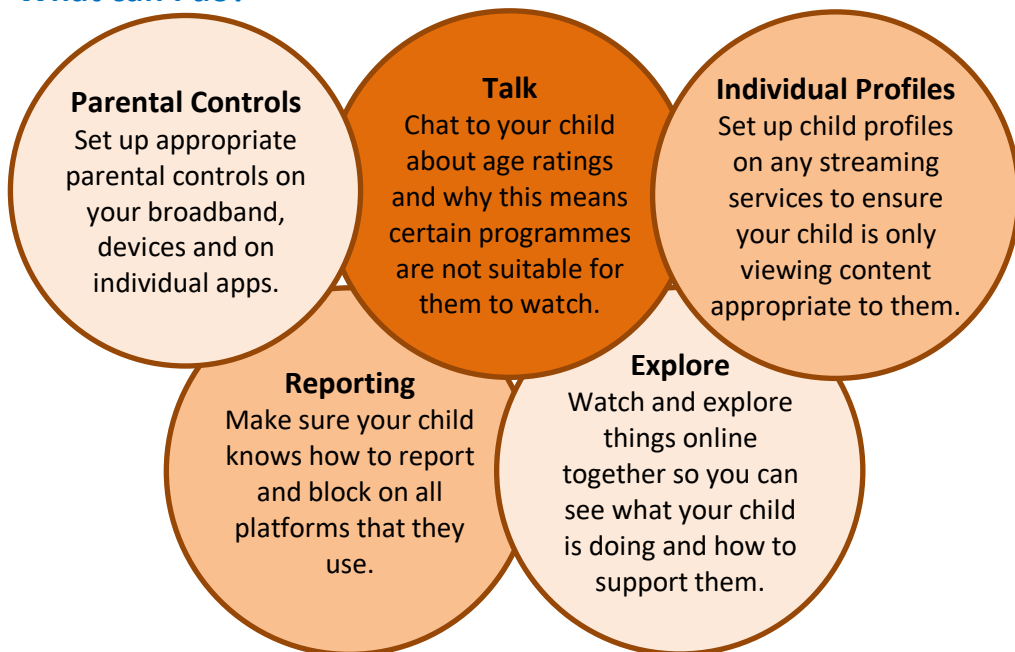
You can use this database to search for games based on your child's age: <https://www.taminggaming.com/cgi-bin/taminggaming.cgi>

Squid Game – rated 15+

Have you heard of Squid Game? It's one of Netflix's latest releases about a group of people participating in a series of children's games in the hope of winning a large cash prize. It has been **rated 15** by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). The BBFC focus on helping you choose what is appropriate for your family to watch. You can find out why Squid Game has been rated 15 by visiting the BBFC: <https://www.bbfc.co.uk/release/squid-game-q29sbgvjdgjlvbjpwwc01mzm3ndg>.

Due to its current popularity, content from this show can be found on numerous other platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Roblox, so your child may come across this show without even viewing it on Netflix. Content may range from trailers of the show or content that other people create such as memes, reenactments and games. We have also seen it referenced in children's playground games in school.

What can I do?



More information:

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are watching and ensure that they know they should always tell you or another trusted adult if they do see anything upsetting. You can find out more about the type of inappropriate content your child might come across online, how to deal with it and links to further support here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/inappropriate-content/learn-about-it/>

Roblox

What is Roblox?

You can either use Roblox to create games or play games that other users have created. **Roblox has a PEGI rating of 7+ BUT** as a lot of the content is user generated, which PEGI does not rate, these games may not be suitable for your child to view/play.

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 your card details are not saved.

What should I do?

- Play the game with your child.
- Explore the parental controls within Roblox and set appropriately for your child (for example restrict access to age-appropriate games).
- Show your child how to use the Report Abuse system within Roblox to report inappropriate content and how to block other users.

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Further information:

- <https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>
- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/roblox-parents%E2%80%99-guide-%E2%80%93-what-it-and-it-safe-your-child>



YouTube

YouTube

YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13, however the App store rates YouTube as 17+ due to the content that can be found on there.

We are aware that several older children have their own YouTube accounts and use these to share digital content that they have created themselves. Although often this is harmless, it has sometimes involved unkind content being posted.

How can I make YouTube safer?

- **Turn on Restricted mode** as this restricts the availability of mature content. You will need to set up a Google account to do this.
- **Explore YouTube together** and see what they like to watch. Make sure your child understands that they can **talk to you** if they see anything that makes them feel uncomfortable online.
- Ensure your child knows how to **report inappropriate content**.

YouTube Kids



YouTube recommends that **YouTube Kids** is used for children under the age of 13 as it provides a safer environment and offers greater controls (you can select the shows that you would prefer them to watch). Find out how to set up the parental controls here:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6172308?hl=en-GB>

Supervised experience (Beta version)

Managed by you by creating a supervised Google Account.

It allows you to choose from three content settings:

- **Explore**: generally suitable for ages 9+.
- **Explore More**: generally suitable for viewers ages 13+.
- **Most of YouTube**: contains almost all YouTube content (except age-restricted content) so it *will* include sensitive topics that may only be appropriate for older teens. <https://www.youtube.com/myfamily/>



Posting videos

You should be over 13 years of age to post videos. Talk to your child about posting videos, do they understand what information they should keep private and what to do if they receive negative comments? YouTube have produced these tips:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802244?hl=en-GB>

Should I let my child set up a YouTube account?

This article features the benefits and risks of using YouTube and their top tips: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/should-i-let-my-child-set-up-a-youtube-account/>



YouTube, along with several partners have created this family guide to supervised experiences:

<https://tinyurl.com/4k8hdasj>

Minecraft

Why be mindful?

Minecraft is rated 7+ or 12+ depending on which version you are playing.

Minecraft remains ever popular and can be a great learning tool that is often used in schools to teach planning skills, recreate famous buildings in 3D and coding. Players use building blocks to create their own worlds. We certainly endorse playing this safely, however if your child is playing Minecraft then you need to ensure that it is being played safely.

What should I be aware of?

- **Multiplayer** – children can interact with others (including strangers), you can switch this option off within settings.
- **Creative or survival mode?** Creative mode removes the survival elements of the game (no monsters) so may be a more appropriate mode for your child to play.
- **Chat facility** – you do have the option to switch this off.
- **Block and report players** – as with any game that your child plays with others, make sure they know how to block and report players within the game.

In addition, protect your child's privacy by using a nickname (don't include their age/birth year) rather than their real name for their profile and chat to your child to make sure that when playing online they know not to tell others personal information such as where they live, what school they go to and their age.

Set up appropriate parental controls

Don't forget to make sure you have set up appropriate parental controls dependent on the device your child is using to play Minecraft.

Further information

This poster includes some great tips for playing Minecraft safely:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/online-safety/minecraft-pdf.pdf>

Is your child playing Gacha Life?

Gacha Life is rated 9+ on the App Store and Google Play Store. This article provides further information about this app as well as potential concerns:

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

The Reverse Selfie by Dove

The Dove Self-Esteem Project have created this powerful video highlighting retouching apps and the pressure to post the perfect selfie. It's worth a watch!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2T-Rh838GA>

Online Safety activities

Fun ideas to use to chat about Online Safety including colouring sheets, wordsearches and quizzes: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/resources/>

My Family's Digital Toolkit

Would you like a personalised online safety toolkit? Answer a few questions about your children's digital habits and then you will receive age-specific advice to support your children online. The form does require an email address. You can find out more information here:

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



MINECRAFT

WhatsApp - What's the problem?

WhatsApp: View once

WhatsApp have introduced a new view once feature when sending photos and videos. This means that once the photo/video has been viewed, the recipient can't see it again and they won't have the ability to forward or save it.

You need to be aware that if your child is using WhatsApp, that they understand that even if they use this feature, the recipient could still take a screenshot or screen recording of the photo/video before it disappears without you knowing. They could then share this with other people.

More information available here: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/general/chats/about-view-once/>

What age can my child start social networking?

All social networks have age restrictions, it's important to review these to check what your child is using is appropriate for them. Internet Matters provide further guidance here as well as listing the minimum age for many of the platforms we see being used:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/>

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.

Change Group Privacy settings

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:

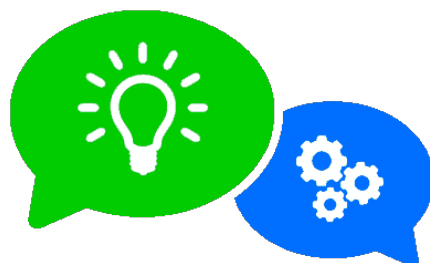
<https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-a-contact>

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, including ourselves use 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

You must be 18+ to use or 13+ with parental permission. 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 within their text or video chat. Omegle states that "Omegle video chat is moderated. However, moderation is not perfect. You may still encounter people who misbehave."

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 always possible for other users to take screenshots of text and video chats.

We recommend that Omegle is not used by children due to the potential imagery shared and language used which can be particularly explicit.

Net Aware rate the safety features of this app as very poor.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/omegle/>

This blog from UK Safer Internet Centre features further information including how to talk to your child about Omegle:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/what-omegle-key-things-parents-and-carers-need-know>



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

More tips from Instagram including how to manage privacy:

<https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511>

Ensure that your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns.

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 more popular again 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:

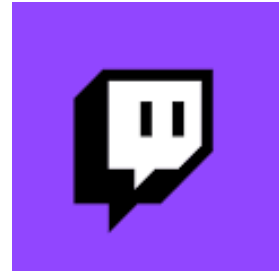
"that parents make decisions about screen time based on their child's development and health, and whether they are getting enough exercise and sleep. It remains a question of balance, as it is when screen use gets in the way or restricts other activities that a child's well-being can be negatively impacted."

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

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/>



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
.CO.UK

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.

