



Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE Online Safety

As part of the computing curriculum, all children are taught about online safety and cyberbullying. Given the current situation, with school closures and children staying at home in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we are aware that children may be spending extended time on tablets, phones, iPads and computers. Whilst we are sending suggested websites and online activities, and would continue encouraging children to access educational sites, such as TimesTable Rockstars and ReadingPlus. We also understand that they will be playing online games with their peers.

In order to continue safeguarding our children, we have been teaching them about online safety in preparation for this time. It is **essential** that you, as parents and carers, continue to check the content that your children are accessing and ensure they understand what to do if they come across inappropriate materials online.

Checklist

- ✓ **Put yourself in control**
Make use of the parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. You can find out how at your broadband provider's website or by visiting internetmatters.org.
- ✓ **Search safely**
Use safe search engines such as swiggle.org.uk or kids-search.com. Safe search settings can also be activated on Google and other search engines as well as YouTube. You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetycentre.
- ✓ **Agree boundaries**
Be clear what your child can and can't do online - where they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. Agree with your child when they can have a mobile phone or tablet.

Over 65 % of parents are most concerned about their 6-10 viewing inappropriate content online*



- ✓ **Explore together**
The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to ask them to tell you about it. Encourage them to use devices in communal areas so you can see what sites they're visiting and share with them.
- ✓ **Check if it's suitable**
The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook and Instagram.

Learn about it:

- Teach your child some simple rules
- Make sure your child knows not to share personal information like their phone number or email address online
 - Only talk to real life friends or family if they are on sites with a social media element like Moshi Monsters or Club Penguin
 - Use privacy settings wherever they exist to keep their information private
 - Be a good online friend and don't say nasty things even if it's just a joke
 - Use secure and legal sites to download music and games
 - Check attachments and pop ups for viruses before they click or download anything
 - Use Public Friendly WiFi when they're out and about to filter inappropriate content
 - Help them to better understand the different online platforms they use and judge the quality and reliability of online resources

Talk about it:

- Tips for a meaningful conversation
- Start conversations when your children won't be embarrassed, for example in the car going home from school
 - Ask them for advice on how to do something online and use this as a conversation starter
 - Make sure they know they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online
 - Be sensitive and praise them when they share their online experiences with you
 - If your child comes to you with an issue, stay calm and listen without judging them
 - Talk about online grooming as you would stranger danger and explain that people they meet online might not be who they say they are
 - Ask them about things online which might make them uncomfortable

Particular Apps and Websites and Parental Controls

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides> - Safer Internet Org offers social media guides for some of the main websites and Apps used by children and young people. They include information about reporting abuse, enabling parental controls and restricting content and disabling location settings.

It is also important to note that **all of the sites and apps** children are using and accessing have **age restrictions of at least 13+ years old**. This is to protect the company that created the app/site and offers little/no protection for users who are under the age restriction.



WhatsApp (age restriction – 16) – Please continue to **monitor conversations and media** shared through group messages. Children should be encouraged to share concerns or worries with you, particularly if they receive content or messages that are upsetting, inappropriate or unkind.



TikTok (age restriction – 13) – For more information about the App TikTok, watch a BBC video - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-47160791/what-is-tiktok> TikTok is a public domain therefore if your child uploads a video anyone can comment on it – be aware of comments.

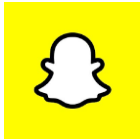
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Snapchat (age restriction – 13) – Children should be reminded that whilst Snapchat messages ‘disappear’ after seconds on the screen. However, please be aware that this site has a **location setting**, which can easily be disabled.



RoBlox (suggested parental supervision up to 13) – RoBlox is a selection of online games, however, not all of these are suitable for younger players. You can limit Roblox to just show a "curated" selection of games which are vetted as suitable for those under 13, but this is not enabled by default. There is a chat feature available, however **safety settings need enabling** and parents "have the ability to limit or disable entirely who can chat with them", while restrictions can be put in place to ensure children can only access "curated content", meaning games which are suitable for those under 13.



Minecraft (age restriction – 13) – There is a chat feature available, however **safety settings need enabling** and parents "have the ability to limit or disable entirely who can chat with them", while restrictions can be put in place to ensure children can only access "curated content", meaning games which are suitable for those under 13.

As children are spending more time on social media, it is increasingly important that parents are monitoring comments/images/videos that children are posting online.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/> - Internet Matters is a website that offers everything from age-specific online safety checklists to guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices. There are also a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world. In addition there is guidance about reporting inappropriate content to sites and enabling parental controls.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/> - ThinkUKnow is a website that offers advice and activities for parents and children about staying safe online.

<https://parentinfo.org/> - CEOP also offers advice for parents.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> - The NSPCC offers advice and information for families about keeping children safe online. It also offers helplines and information for children and families about other issues.

If you have any queries on the above, please don't hesitate to contact us,

Regards,

Ms Mackenzie

Mr Bignall

Ms Rader