

12 Smartphone Online Safety Tips

FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

The Christmas season has finally arrived and soon many of you will be opening your presents in the hope that Santa has listened to your request for the latest mobile phone or smart device.

Owning a mobile phone can be fun, but it's important to use it safely and responsibly. By following our safety tips below, you can make sure that you set up your phone securely, keep your personal information private and enjoy using your phone in the healthiest way possible.

1 ALWAYS SECURE YOUR PHONE WITH A PASSWORD

This will help to keep your private information safe and won't allow others to access your phone without your permission. Make sure your password is memorable and personal to you but something which other people can't guess, and always share it with your parents just in case you forget it.

2 DISABLE LOCATION SETTINGS

This can usually be done from the device's privacy control settings. Disabling location settings means that your phone can't be tracked by others and strangers can't tell where you are when you're using it. It also helps to save battery.

3 ALWAYS USE A SECURE WIFI NETWORK

When you use your WIFI at home usually it is a secure network that only you and your family know the password to. Public networks, like those in coffee shops, can be accessed by anyone which means that people could potentially hack into your device and access your personal information without you realising.

4 ONLY PAIR WITH BLUETOOTH DEVICES YOU KNOW

A Bluetooth connection with another device means that you can send and receive data wirelessly. For example, you could listen to music wirelessly or receive pictures and videos from your friends. However, pairing your phone with a device you don't know means that you could be sharing personal information with a stranger or could leave your device open to receiving viruses.

5 ONLY USE APPS WHICH YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO USE

Before downloading any new apps, always check the age-rating of the app. If you need help, ask your parent or carer to make sure that the app is safe for you to use and never download anything which you are too young for as it may contain things that aren't safe for you to see.

6 BEWARE OF BECOMING ADDICTED TO YOUR PHONE

Your phone can be fun to use and it's easy to become too attached, whether it's keeping in touch with friends, discovering new features or downloading the latest apps. Remember it's always good to talk in person, go out and have fun and get regular exercise. This will keep you fit and healthy and make you appreciate there's more to life than just your mobile phone.

7 LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

Using your phone for too long, particularly in the evenings, can make you feel tired at school, affect your concentration and make you lose interest in other things in life. Only use your phone at certain times of the day and don't use it close to bedtime. You can set a 'screen time limit' via the settings on your phone. This will help you stay fit and healthy and means that you will still be able to focus and perform well at school.

8 THINK OF OTHERS WHEN TAKING PHOTOS

Don't take embarrassing photos of other people on your phone. If other people get access to the photo and share it with more people, it could make that person really upset and treated as a form of bullying. Always be mindful of the photos you take using your camera and who you share them with.

9 MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS SET UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS'

This means that you will be able to use your phone safely and securely and won't accidentally do things you shouldn't do. The best time to do this is when you get a new phone or device so that you're protected from the very beginning.

10 ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR PARENTS IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE

Sometimes, even though your phone is really secure, you might see something you don't like, or someone might contact you who you don't know. If this happens, always tell your trusted adult like your parents, carers, other adult family members or a teacher, all of whom will be able to support you and advise you on what you should do next.

11 DON'T TEXT AND WALK

This might seem like a strange thing to say but it can be dangerous to stare at your mobile phone whilst walking outside alongside busy roads or bicycle paths. In some cases, children have been knocked over by cars or cyclists because they haven't been aware of their surroundings whilst texting or playing games on their mobile devices.

12 DON'T SHARE YOUR NUMBER OR YOUR DEVICE WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW.

Never feel pressured into sharing your phone number with people you don't know and don't lend your phone to strangers or keep it where others could get hold of it. Look after your device and always keep it hidden from sight to avoid it being stolen or broken into.



TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Its main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-synching and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide.



What parents need to know about

TIKTOK



AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up to the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are light-hearted or designed to make people laugh. However, there have been a number of videos reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and young teens engaging in sexually suggestive content. More recently, suicide-themed related videos have been widely circulated. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be common to come across explicit and age-inappropriate content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.



INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-synching and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.



TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor Musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities – social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.



ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into a 45-minute visit.



IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.



Safety Tips for Parents



TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use TikTok, make sure you take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have an open dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.



USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media stardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.



ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.



MONITOR VIEWING HABITS

Even if it doesn't make you popular, keep a close eye on what your child is viewing and sharing on TikTok. Whilst the app has moderation tools, videos can still slip through the net so it's important to regularly check in on what they're watching. Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with it. You could then even watch some videos with your child, turning it into a bonding opportunity also.



LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a relatively safe space for your child to express themselves. However, in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.



MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



FAMILY SAFETY MODE

TikTok Family Safety Mode allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's. It's a great way to oversee your child's digital wellbeing by giving you direct control over their safety settings and being able to remotely turn features on and off. This includes managing screen time, the ability to send and receive direct messages (and with whom) and the ability to restrict the appearance of content that might not be age appropriate.



SOURCES: www.tiktok.com



AGE RESTRICTION
13+



What parents need to know about **YOUTUBE**

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EASY TO ACCESS

Any child with a Gmail account can sign into YouTube & access videos. Some content is flagged 'age-restricted', but the platform relies on self-verification, meaning kids can get around the rules with a fake date of birth. This could enable access to vulgar, violent & dangerous videos.



USERS CAN PRIVATELY CONTACT YOUR CHILD

When your child is signed-in to YouTube with their Gmail account, there are various ways they can send & receive messages. This could be via the messages icon, or via the 'About' tab. There is scope here for users who your child does not know to make contact.



YOUTUBE SUGGESTS RELATED CONTENT

YouTube will often 'auto play' videos based on your child's viewing habits. The aim is to show related & appropriate content. But the problem is: it's possible your child will be exposed to inappropriate content that isn't accurately related.



'CHALLENGE VIDEOS' CAN GO TOO FAR

Challenge videos refer to a stunt you're encouraged to recreate & film. Many challenge videos can be harmless & for a good cause, like the Ice Bucket Challenge. But some are dangerous & even life threatening, such as the Bird Box Challenge.



SHARING VIDEOS RISKS YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY

If your child has a Google account, they can upload their own videos. To do this, they must create a personal profile page known as a 'YouTube Channel'. The videos uploaded here can be viewed, commented on & shared by anyone. This could put your child's privacy at risk.



Tips To Protect Your Child

APPLY 'RESTRICTED MODE'

Restricted mode helps to hide any mature or unpleasant videos from your children. It uses YouTube's own automated system & looks at what other users flag as inappropriate content. It must be enabled in the settings menu on each individual device.

CHANGE WHO CAN SEE VIDEOS

You can change who can view your child's content in the settings. Options include Public (available to all), Private (only available to people you share it with & cannot be shared) or Unlisted (available to people you share it with & can be shared further).



BLOCK CONCERNING USERS

To help protect your child from cyber-bullies, harassment or persistent offensive comments, you can 'block' individual users. Doing so hides your child's videos from the user & stops the user being able to contact your child in any way.

CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE

Influence & control what your child watches using features such as Playlists (your videos play continuously rather than videos YouTube recommends) & Subscriptions (you choose channels your child can watch). It's also good to turn off auto play by toggling the blue button alongside the 'Up Next' title when viewing a video.

CREATE A 'FAMILY' GOOGLE ACCOUNT

Create a Google account to be used by the whole family. This will allow you to monitor exactly what your child is watching, uploading & sharing. Plus, your child's YouTube page will display their recently watched videos, searches, recommended videos & suggested channels.



GET YOUR OWN ACCOUNT

Create your own account so you can explore features yourself. Learn how to flag inappropriate videos, how to moderate comments & how to block users. This will help you feel more confident when providing advice & guidance to your children.

BE MINDFUL OF CYBERBULLYING

Once your child has posted a video, a worldwide audience can see it. Strangers may choose to comment on the video, both positively & negatively. So, be careful to check comments & any other interactions your child is making through the platform.



GET TO KNOW POPULAR CHANNELS

It's good to know which channels are most popular with your children. Some of the most popular channels right now are: PewDiePie, NigaHiga, Zoella, KSI, JennaMarbles, Markiplier, Smosh, ThatcherJoe & Casper Lee.

DON'T ASSUME YOUR CHILD IS TOO YOUNG

YouTube and YouTube Kids are quickly becoming the chosen viewing platforms for children between the ages of 3-15 & it's likely this trend will only increase. It's also possible children will become familiar with the platform at a younger & younger age. So it's important to understand the positives & negatives of the platform.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



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Online Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional relationship with a child and communicates with them through the internet with the intent to commit a sexual offence. This type of victimisation can take place across any platform; from social media and messaging apps to online gaming and live streaming. Often it involves young people being tricked, forced or pressured into doing something they wouldn't normally do (coercion) and often the groomer's goal is to meet the victim in a controlled setting to sexually or physically abuse them. In some cases children may be abducted or have long-lasting psychological damage.



What parents need to know about

ONLINE GROOMING



CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE

Unsurprisingly children are often most at risk as they are easy to target and unlikely to question the person who is engaging in conversation with them. Groomers will use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate them from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. Predators will stalk apps and websites that are popular with young people and will use a 'scattergun' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chances of success.



LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS

Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, dares or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'likes' or even money for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, all have live streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Live.me, BIGO Live, YouNow and many more.



ANYONE CAN BE A PREDATOR

The internet has made the ability to interact with strangers online easy. Many sites and apps are reliant on individual users entering their own information when signing up. However individuals can remain anonymous if they choose to enter inaccurate information and many online predator cases are due to groomers using impersonation techniques. However, often the greater threat comes from adults who 'hide in plain sight', choosing to befriend young children without hiding their real identity.



CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT

Unfortunately, most children find the 'grooming' process (before any meeting) an enjoyable one as the predator will compliment, encourage, and flatter them to gain their trust, friendship and curiosity – 'a wolf in sheep's clothing' scenario. This often means children fail to disclose or report what is happening. If the groomer is also previously known to the child, their family and their friends, then this can make detection even harder.



FROM OPEN TO CLOSED MESSAGING

Online predators may contact their victims using any number of ways including social media, forums, chat rooms, gaming communities or live streaming apps. Sometimes there is little need to develop a 'friendship / rapport stage', as the victim has already shared personal information online and is communicating openly with others. Children may also be prepared to add other online users they don't know so well to gain 'online credibility' through increasing their friends list. Predators will often seize this opportunity to slowly build a relationship and then move their conversation with the child to a more secure and private area, such as through direct messaging.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Online predators will use emotive language and aim to form close, trusted bonds with their victims through showering them with compliments and making them feel good about themselves. Often victims will refer to them as their 'boyfriends' or 'girlfriends' and it can be difficult to convince some young people that they have been groomed, often leading to lasting psychological effects.



Safety Tips for Parents & Carers



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child on a regular basis about what they do online. By talking openly with them about online relationships, they can quickly ascertain the kind of behaviour which is appropriate or inappropriate. Ask them whether they have any online friends or if they play online games with people they haven't met. This could then open up conversations about the subject of grooming.



CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

In order to give your child a safer online experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they use. Disable location sharing if you can. If you use location-sharing apps to check where your child is, remember that these could always be used by strangers to follow your child without their knowledge. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.



MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE-STREAMING USE

It's important to be aware of what your child is sharing on social media and with whom. Create your own profile and become 'friends' with them or follow them so that you can monitor their activity. Similarly, always check on them if they are live streaming and implement privacy controls. Choose a generic screen name and profile picture that hides their identity. You may also feel more comfortable being present each time they live stream.



STICK TO 'TRUE FRIENDS'

Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with people who they do know. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as close family and friends. Remind them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.



DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to detect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will pay your child compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may admire how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know they can talk to you if someone does something they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.



Meet our expert

Jonathan Taylor is an online safety expert and former Covert Internet Investigator for the Metropolitan Police. He is a specialist in online grooming and exploitation and has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, social media apps and platforms.



LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS

Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns and advise parents to look out for:

- Secretive online behaviour.
- Late night internet or smartphone usage.
- Meeting new friends in unusual places.
- Becoming clingy, develop sleeping or eating problems or even bedwetting.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, unexplainably.
- Seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.



Part of our Social Media & Live Streaming Series



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What you need to know about...

VIDEO STREAMING APPS & SITES

What are they?

'Video Streaming Apps & Sites'

Video streaming apps and sites can allow people to share activities and hobbies with others in real time or watch their favourite films and TV shows online. There are different types of video streaming services. Twitch is used for watching others play video games in real time; you can watch YouTube live and watch Netflix, Amazon Prime or Apple TV with friends and family. Video streaming has gained popularity in the last few years because there is a sense of community when watching with others and people can comment on videos and ask questions in real-time.

Know the Risks

Inappropriate videos

When watching on video streaming apps, it is difficult to filter the content that is out there. For instance, when a child is watching a YouTube video, they will get recommendations for other similar videos. The risk is even higher with videos which are live, as children could be watching inappropriate content in real time.

Chatting with strangers

Video streaming apps or sites increase the risk of children communicating with strangers online. For example, most YouTube videos allow users to comment on the video. Whilst children could be watching something innocent, the comments section can be used by groomers to try and direct them towards private messaging.

Binge-watching

Children can easily fall into 'binge-watching' on video streaming apps which can impact on sleep, mood and their ability to concentrate on other things. The autoplay function can make it difficult to find time for a break and often the recommended content is similar to what children are already watching based on the algorithms used.

Screen addiction

In addition to binge-watching, most video streaming apps are available across all devices with an internet connection which can mean increased screen time. Popular apps, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, have huge libraries of content which can mean hours of viewing time and potentially less time spent on learning, playing outside or interaction with friends and family.

Safety Tips

Check age-ratings

13+

Ensure that children are at the right age to use the app. Most video streaming apps require users to be at least 13 years old. Be clear on what apps and sites children can use. Encourage them to never participate in online discussions that are offensive and never interact with strangers or people they don't trust.

Change privacy settings

Check the privacy setting of children's app. Ensure that for whichever app they are using, the settings are set to private and disable comments if applicable. Furthermore, set screen time restrictions via the app or the device to limit children's use.

Implement parental controls

Activate parental controls your child's devices and apps. This will prevent them from accessing content they shouldn't. For instance, on Netflix, create a kids profile. This way they will only be able to view videos appropriate for their age group. Likewise, use YouTube Kids over YouTube or apply restrictions and turn off features such as autoplay.

Spend time on the app

Before allowing children to access a video streaming app, spend some time browsing through its content. Familiarise yourself with how it works, what content is available and what your child wants to watch. Check-in regularly and ask what they enjoy watching and how it makes them feel.

Action & Support

Report inappropriate content

If a child comes across inappropriate content or something that makes them feel uncomfortable on an app such as YouTube, you can report the content and the person who has uploaded the content to the platform. If a stranger is looking to engage with your child, block them and report them.

Have an open and honest conversation

Adults can review the TV shows and films that have been watched many video streaming apps. If a child seems upset or shocked by something they have seen or if you are concerned about anything they've viewed, try to talk to them about it and have an open and honest conversation to help understand any concerns.

Encourage other activities

If you think a child is spending too much time on a video streaming app, try to foster their interest in other activities or hobbies away from their device. Encourage them to get outdoors, play with friends, play board games or just simply spend more time together with you.

Our Expert

Parven Kaur



Parven Kaur is social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks; a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.

"The industry, as far as we can see as families, are grooming the next generation with a whole set of online games and these are aimed at 7, 8, 9 year olds – that's the next generation who are going to be their income generators" - Liz Ritchie, Gambling With Lives

The digital world that we live in can be a minefield for families and parents/carers. The way in which children 'game' now is completely different to how modern day parents and carers would have experienced. The 'monetization' of gaming is at the forefront of research and there are increasing concerns surrounding online gaming and the subsequent links this has with underage gambling.

From ONLINE GAMING to ONLINE GAMBLING

Recognising the Signs

10 Signs for Parents to Look For:

Disordered gambling is sometimes referred to as the 'silent killer'. Unlike drug or alcohol addictions the signs are sometimes harder to spot and if not dealt with at an early age can have a devastating affect on both the gambler and their families later on in life.

1

EXCESSIVE USE OF DEVICES

This can lead to increased isolated behaviour and lying about the amount of time spent online.



2

SPENDING MONEY ONLINE WITHOUT PERMISSION

If a child is willing to spend money online (invariably on a parent's card) without permission then this should act as an early warning sign to parents to ensure that there are some barriers and parental controls in place.

3

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

Children may become moody, aggressive or argumentative particularly during or shortly after periods of online gaming.

4

A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TO SCHOOL

Children may display an obvious change in attitude to learning and a more negative view of school.

5

DISENGAGED WITH FAMILY LIFE

Children start to prefer spending time alone online rather than engage in normal family activities.

6

COMPULSIVE EATING

This includes both eating the wrong types of food excessively and not eating healthily.



7

IMPATIENT

Not prepared to wait for anything (mirrored in excessive online game play and in app purchases) and nothing is ever good enough.

8

'THE LOOK'

Compulsive gamblers are often said to look zoned out, have a greyness, look ill, experience a loss of weight and stop taking pride in their appearance. The same can be said of those who are starting to develop a gaming addiction.



9

OBSESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Children who demonstrate obsessive behaviour in everyday life are often reported to be 'at risk' of developing an online gaming disorder.

10

DISHONESTY

This could include starting to tell lies and in the more extreme cases even stealing things.



10 Top Tips for Parents:

If you think that your child may be at risk of developing a gaming addiction then there are a series of measures that you can put in place. This is by no means an exhaustive list but just some strategies that could ensure a potential situation does not escalate.

1

BE AWARE

Do not fall into the trap that it's just what children do – as parents/carers/families be 'on the same page' and do not be allowed to be played off against one another.

2

VISIT THE GP

Although both gaming/gambling addictions are now recognised as a mental disorder, some doctors may not be experts in these areas – families can self-refer to NHS Gaming and Gambling Clinics.

3

DO YOUR RESEARCH

See what help and support is available. Visit www.gamfam.co.uk and become an expert.

4

SPEAK TO THE SCHOOL

Have an open and honest conversation. Schools are investing heavily in mental health and can arrange or direct you to the most appropriate support services.

5

TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST

This applies to school work and in creating a learning environment at home. Find activities and hobbies that create a life away from the screen and be part of it.

6

BECOME THE EXPERT

Research the game your child is playing – does the game have loot boxes?

7

PUT BARRIERS IN PLACE

Set up parental controls for all devices (including phones) and set up screen time. Visit the 'Partnership with Parents' section at www.gamfam.co.uk for further details.

8

FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Turn off in-app purchases. Do not link your debit/credit card to your child's device and use a prepaid card instead. For example Monzo, Go Henry, Nimble or speak to your bank for advice.

9

DISCUSS LOOT BOXES AND SKIN BETTING

Have a conversation about loot boxes and skin betting. Many games can still be played and completed without using loot boxes on the console version but be mindful of the mobile versions.

10

DO NOT LEND MONEY FOR GAMBLING

Or if you think it will be used for online gaming, without your permission.



The above guidance has been produced by





What parents & carers need to know about... XBOX ONE



The Xbox One is among the most popular video game consoles on the planet. Released in 2013, there are a multitude of Xbox One variants on the market, including the One, One X and One S, with the next full console, the Xbox Series X, coming towards the end of 2020. With units sold exceeding 50 million, there's a whole network of gamers already enjoying online experiences together through the console's Xbox Live service. That's why it's important that parents and carers understand exactly what the Xbox One is all about.

Playing with Strangers

Xbox Live is the online service for the Xbox One, and it's where the majority of online games are played. Part of the fun of gaming is playing with people from all different walks of life, and while most players will only be looking to have fun and make some new friends along the way, it also means that children can be playing and potentially communicating with people online they don't know and have never met.



Online Bullying

Xbox includes multiplayer games and the ability to interact and chat with other players. This includes being able to private message one another. Xbox has community standards that players should abide by however these aren't always followed and it's possible, like any online social media interaction, that players can send harmful or hateful messages to your child or even display online bullying behaviour.



Inappropriate Content

Like many gaming platforms, one of the biggest attractions to Xbox One is the ability to play games online. Children can access these through the Games Pass service. However, this can also open up channels for younger children to potentially play online games with older children or young adults who may use swear words or inappropriate language. Furthermore, if there are no age restrictions in place, children could access games that contain adult themes such as graphic depictions of war, violence or even sexually suggestive material.



Purchasing Add-Ons

The Xbox Games Pass gives players access to over 100 high quality games which can be played on the console, PC and, soon, other Android devices depending on what type of pass is bought. Players can also receive discounts on in-game purchases and add-ons, which can quickly add up, particularly if your child is operating under an adult account and has a card registered with no spending limits in place.



Screen Addiction

The Xbox is not just a games console; it's a family entertainment system. Children can play games online, stream their favourite films and TV shows, listen to music, watch YouTube, chat on Skype and browse the web. All of this makes it very easy for children to rack up the hours in front of the screen and find it difficult to switch it off which could lead to tiredness, fatigue and an inability or reluctance to engage in other activities.



Phishing Risk

Phishing is the act of posing as somebody else (possibly an authority figure like an Xbox or Microsoft employee) in order to obtain things like passwords for accounts. Unfortunately, there are many people out there who look to those who are vulnerable and aim to exploit them. They could disguise their intentions by asking seemingly innocent questions, with an ulterior motive of gaining details that will give them access to personal accounts or banking details.



Safety Tips



Set up a Microsoft Family Account

Setting up a family account is a great way to personalise your child's online experience based on age-appropriate limits that you set for privacy, online purchases, content filters and screen time. It provides you with the ability to manage parental settings and ensures that only you can change Xbox privacy and online settings for a child account.



Check Age-Ratings

Make sure you're aware of the games that your child is playing and what the PEGI ratings for them are. The ratings are there to guide parents in knowing what's contained within the games, but it's up to them to make the decision of whether or not they're suitable to play. If you want a complete overview, use the family account settings to block inappropriate content and make sure your kids only view content and play games that are right for their age.



Discuss Screen Time

Taking regular breaks from gaming is vitally important for children as much as anybody so it's important to encourage children to take time away from their screen and to do other things. If you're really concerned about their device usage, you can implement screen time limits from your family account to help encourage a healthy balance. This can be done on specific apps and games and can be implemented for individual devices or every device they own.



Create Spending Limits

Having a pre-set limit of how much a child can spend is a great way to set boundaries on purchases with your bank accounts, while giving them the freedom to spend some money on their favourite games. On top of that, it's a great way to encourage fiscal responsibility at an early age. If you'd prefer, you can also have child accounts request approval to buy things through you each time they want to make a purchase.



Report Bullying Behaviour

Teach your child how to report inappropriate behaviour that they experience online. If it's a particular player, they can search for them from the People tab and then select report or block. Make sure they know when to tell a trusted adult if somebody has said or done something upsetting online. It's also worth remembering that kids don't have to game online; there are a lot of games that can be played offline either alone, or with family members in the house.



Keep Profiles Private

Use the Xbox controls and settings to ensure your child's profile is kept private online. Manage what others can see about your child's personal details and limit who your child can communicate with and who can interact with their content or send them friend requests. This will help to reduce the number of strangers contacting them and will keep you in the loop as to who they are engaging with online.



Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBLE. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



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



Sexting occurs predominantly on, but is not exclusive to these apps...



Snapchat



Tinder



WhatsApp



Kik

Did you know?
IT IS ILLEGAL TO TAKE, MAKE OR SHARE AN INDECENT IMAGE OR VIDEO OF A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 18 – EVEN IF IT IS CONSENSUAL

Sexting involves sending and receiving explicit messages, images or videos of a sexual nature. This content is usually uploaded on a mobile device, which can then be uploaded onto social networking sites and shared further. They can be sent to or from a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, or someone your child has met online. Sexting is often described as the new flirting for children – but it is illegal for anyone under the age of 18, with police forces in England and Wales recording 6,238 underage "sexting" offences in 2016-17, a rate of 17 a day.

What parents need to know about SEXTING

BREAKING THE LAW

Sexting is illegal if you share, make, take or distribute an indecent image or video of a child under the age of 18. It is an offence under the Protection of Children Act (1978), the Criminal Justice Act (1988), and under Section 67 of the Serious Crime Act (2015). Sexting or 'youth produced sexual imagery' between children is still illegal, even if they are in a relationship and any images are shared consensually.

CHILDREN THINK IT'S HARMLESS

Many young people see sexting as 'banter' or a joke, an easy way to show someone they like and trust them, or just a cool thing to do. But they may not realise the consequences of sharing personal information and how it can be potentially harmful to them in the future.

REGRETTING THEIR ACTIONS

Although some children are willingly exchanging images, many may regret sharing the messages, images and videos after they have sent or uploaded them. Once it's out there, there's no going back, and your child may feel ashamed, vulnerable, worried or anxious about imagery resurfacing later, especially if a relationship or friendship has broken down. 'Sexting' was the most viewed information and advice topic on the Childline website in 2017, showing the need for people to get help.

BULLYING, COERCION & BLACKMAIL

Your child may feel pressured into sexting, so they don't come across as boring, or think it's a way to show someone they care for them. They may feel under pressure to give in to repeated requests or feel obliged to share sexual messages and imagery. Sexting can also expose young adults to the risk of being exploited by paedophiles or sexual predators, who then use images to extort additional photos, sexual favours, and sometimes money from victims.

SHARING

Once a photo or video is out there, there's no way of knowing how many people have saved it, tagged it or shared it. Children like to show off to their peers and suddenly, an image has gone beyond its intended recipient, to classmates, friends, and even strangers. Once an image or video has been shared online, there's nothing to stop it being archived and repeatedly shared.

Top Tips for Parents

TALK TO YOUR CHILD

Encourage open dialogue about appropriate information to share with others both online and offline, discuss the word 'sexting' and ensure that they know what it is and what it involves. Show that you understand that sexting can reflect natural adolescent curiosity about nudity, bodies and exploring their sexuality, but explain why it's important to think twice before sharing something. Show that you are approachable and understanding.

DISCUSS THE LEGALITIES

Children and young people may not realise that what they are doing is illegal. Ensure that your child understands that when they are aged under 18, it is against the law for anyone to take or have a sexual photo of them – even if it's a selfie, and even when the activity is consensual.

EXPLAIN THE REPERCUSSIONS

Let your children know that once they have sent a message, they are no longer in control of it, and the messages, images and videos that they may intend to share with one individual may end up where the whole world can have access to them. Even if they completely trust someone, other people using their phone might accidentally see it. And, later in life, it may affect their online reputation, especially if universities, employers or future partners access the imagery.

HOW TO REMOVE IMAGES

If an image has already been shared, either your child or yourself should speak to the person that the image was shared with and ask them to delete it. You can also use the report button on a website where the image was posted. Speak to your child's school, as they may be able to confiscate phones if they know that they have sexual imagery stored. If you believe the child was forced into sending the message, report this to the police. You or your child can also report the content to CEOP with one of their child protection advisors (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command).

BLOCKING AND STOPPING SEXTING

Show your child how to use the block button on their devices and favourite apps to stop people sending them unwanted messages. You can also set up parental controls with your internet service provider or on your child's phone to stop them from accessing harmful content.

HAS YOUR CHILD RECEIVED A SEXUAL IMAGE?

Firstly, reassure your child that they have done the right thing by speaking to you about the incident. Ask them if they requested the image or if they received it unwillingly. If the image has been sent to your child by an adult and you are concerned about sexual exploitation or grooming, contact CEOP immediately.

SOURCES: NSPCC (2015) Review Under Pressure: What's Affected Children in April 2013 - March 2014. [online]. nsppc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/annual-reports/childline-review-under-pressure.pdf. Last accessed on 25/07/18; theconversation.com/one-in-seven-teens-are-sexting-says-new-research-92170; learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/childline-annual-review; bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41880500



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A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061



14 WAYS TO BE KIND ONLINE

Showing kindness online can mean so much to someone else. It is a choice we can all make that helps others, puts people's needs before our own and which can generate feelings of empathy and compassion. Small gestures can have a large impact and often one act of kindness can lead to more, making the world a happier and more positive place. That's why we've created this guide to suggest a few simple 'acts of kindness online' that can benefit people's mental health, support their wellbeing and encourage a more positive approach to engaging online.



5. LIKE, LOVE & CELEBRATE

If somebody posts something that you like on social media, like it, love it or celebrate it! It's a small gesture but could mean a lot.

8. SHARE POSITIVE POSTS

If you see something online that inspires you, share it with people you know. An inspirational quote, a beautiful photo or a motivational video can lift spirits, improve self-esteem and help make people feel better about themselves.

9. HOST AN ONLINE QUIZ

Video conferencing apps are a great way to get friends and family together. If you know someone who is feeling lonely, host an online quiz and invite them to join in. It could really cheer them up.

12. CONNECT FRIENDS & FAMILY WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS

You may know two people amongst your friends and family who you trust and know well who have similar interests and likes. Introducing them can be a great way for them to make new friends but remember to always ask their permission first.



Sometimes a friend or family member might post a question online or ask for help with something they can't do themselves. If you know the answer or are able to offer help, provide support and send a response. Something that may be easy for you might be difficult for someone else.



If somebody you know has done something good or shown kindness themselves, thank them for it. It costs nothing and showing them that you appreciate it means so much.

4. SHARE FUNNY VIDEOS OR IMAGES WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

We often come across funny videos or images online that make us laugh and then we move on. If you found it funny, your friends and family might too. It could help someone smile who may be having a bad day.



6. VIDEO CALL YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY

It can be easy to be consumed by daily routine. Using apps like Zoom, FaceTime or WhatsApp are great for connecting with others far away and shows you're thinking of them even though you can't physically meet them in person.



7. TELL SOMEONE YOU'RE THINKING OF THEM

We can't always tell how people are feeling online and just dropping somebody a message to ask if they're ok or that you're thinking of them could literally make their day.

10. THINK BEFORE YOU COMMENT

Sometimes thinking before you act can be just as significant as acting in the first place. Showing thought before you comment could stop you posting something hurtful, offensive or negative. It's always better to post positively or post nothing at all.

11. BE COMPASSIONATE & UNDERSTANDING

Being empathetic towards others and their situation is often an act of kindness and selflessness that gets overlooked. If you notice someone who is upset, drop them a message and offer to listen.

13. RECOMMEND SOMETHING YOU ENJOY DOING TO OTHERS

If you enjoy doing something online, such as playing a game, or if you've found a great learning resource, share it with others. Even if you've watched a good film, letting others know can be an act of generosity that brings them excitement or pleasure at a time when they might need it the most.



14. PRAISE OTHERS FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

Sometimes your friends or family might post something online that they're proud to have done. It might be an exam they've passed, learning a new skill or just completing a task. Either way, it's always kind to recognise hard work and effort through praise and celebration.



Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



What children need to know about

ONLINE BULLYING



Why does it happen?

GOING ONLINE MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO SAY AND DO THINGS THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO FACE TO FACE. ONLINE BULLIES DON'T GET TO SEE THEIR VICTIMS' REACTIONS IN REAL LIFE, SO THIS CAN COOON THEM FROM THE REAL DAMAGE THAT THEY ARE DOING. QUITE OFTEN, PEOPLE BULLY BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING DIFFICULT THEMSELVES AND TAKING IT OUT ON OTHERS IS THE ONLY WAY THEY KNOW HOW TO GET CONTROL OF THEIR OWN EMOTIONS.



What is online bullying?

ONLINE BULLYING – ALSO KNOWN AS CYBERBULLYING – IS BULLYING THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE INTERNET OR VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND MOBILE PHONES. IT CAN INCLUDE:

1. SENDING SOMEONE MEAN OR THREATENING EMAILS, DIRECT MESSAGES OR TEXT MESSAGES
2. HACKING INTO SOMEONE'S ONLINE ACCOUNT
3. BEING RUDE OR MEAN TO SOMEONE WHEN PLAYING ONLINE GAMES
4. POSTING PRIVATE OR EMBARRASSING PHOTOS ONLINE OR SENDING THEM TO OTHERS
5. CREATING FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS THAT MOCK SOMEONE OR TRICK THEM
6. EXCLUDING SOMEONE FROM AN ONLINE CONVERSATION OR BLOCKING THEM FOR NO REASON



BE KIND ONLINE

BEFORE PRESSING 'SEND' ON COMMENTS, ASK YOURSELF THESE 3 QUESTIONS...

1. WHY AM I POSTING THIS?
2. WOULD I SAY THIS IN REAL LIFE?
3. HOW WOULD I FEEL IF SOMEBODY SAID THIS TO ME?



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How does it feel to be bullied?

BEING BULLIED CAN IMPACT ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS. BECAUSE IT HAPPENS ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET OR COMPUTER, IT CAN FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNDER THREAT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS YOUR BEDROOM. DON'T FORGET...IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED.



Am I an online bully?

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T OBVIOUS THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG, BUT IF YOU USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO UPSET, ANGER OR EMBARRASS SOMEONE ON PURPOSE, THIS MEANS YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ONLINE BULLYING. IT MIGHT BE AS SIMPLE AS 'LIKING' A MEAN POST, LAUGHING AT AN ONLINE VIDEO, OR SPREADING A RUMOUR, BUT THE PERSON BEING BULLIED COULD FEEL LIKE THEY ARE BEING GANGED UP ON. THINK ABOUT HOW IT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL IF IT HAPPENED TO YOU. EVERYONE CAN MAKE MISTAKES, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEARN FROM THEM – GO BACK AND DELETE ANY UPSETTING OR NASTY POSTS, TWEETS OR COMMENTS YOU'VE WRITTEN.

Who do I tell?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE BULLYING ON YOUR OWN. TALK TO AN ADULT THAT YOU TRUST – A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR TEACHER. MOST WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES AND ONLINE GAMES OR MOBILE APPS LET YOU REPORT AND BLOCK PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTHERING YOU. YOU COULD ALSO CONTACT CHILDLINE (WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK), WHERE A TRAINED COUNSELLOR WILL LISTEN TO ANYTHING THAT'S WORRYING YOU – YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME.



How do I prove it?

WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAPPENS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOCUMENT AND REPORT THE BEHAVIOUR, SO IT CAN BE ADDRESSED – RECORD THE DATES AND TIMES WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAS OCCURRED, AND SAVE AND PRINT SCREENSHOTS, EMAILS, AND TEXT MESSAGES.



How can I stay safe?

MAKE SURE YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS ARE SET SO THAT ONLY PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND TRUST CAN SEE WHAT YOU POST. NEVER GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE, SUCH AS IN PUBLIC PROFILES, CHAT ROOMS OR BLOGS, AND AVOID FURTHER COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE SENDING THE MESSAGES. KEEP AWARE OF FAKE PROFILES AND INTERNET USERS PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE THAT THEY ARE NOT.



ONLINE SAFETY: ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

How can schools help parents?

EXPLAIN AND INFORM

MANY PARENTS RELY ON SCHOOLS TO HELP KEEP THEM UP TO SPEED AND HELP DEAL WITH ONLINE ISSUES. STAY ON TOP OF ONLINE SAFETY RELATED NEWS, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS AND NEW APP RELEASES, AND SHARE IMPORTANT UPDATES WITH PARENTS.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR BUILDING SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS. MAKE IT EASY FOR PARENTS TO ACCESS ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION. PLAN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TOO MANY THINGS GOING OUT ON THE SAME DAY AND TRY DIFFERENT WAYS TO INVOLVE THEM.

INVOLVE CHILDREN

INVITING PUPILS TO GET INVOLVED IN SHARING ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION ENABLES PARENTS/CARERS TO HEAR FIRST-HAND HOW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT USING TECHNOLOGY, AND WHAT STEPS THEY TAKE TO STAY SAFE.

MAKE IT ENGAGING

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MUCH EFFORT YOU PUT INTO AN ASSEMBLY, PRESENTATION OR NEWSLETTER ETC. IF THE CONTENT ISN'T ENGAGING, YOU'LL QUICKLY LOSE THEIR ATTENTION.

7 fun ways to share key messages

WHILE PARENTS' EVENINGS AND MEETINGS ARE A GREAT WAY OF INFORMING PARENTS AND CARERS ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY, IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO GET ALL PARENTS PHYSICALLY INTO THE SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME.

85%

85% OF PARENTS SAY THEY PREFER TO LEARN ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY VIA DIGITAL RESOURCES.



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1. Videos

VIDEO HAS BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE ONLINE EXPERIENCE AND IS THE PERFECT MEDIUM FOR DELIVERING A MESSAGE QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY. OF 600 PARENTS ASKED, 85% TOLD US THAT THEY PREFER TO LEARN ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY VIA E-LEARNING VIDEOS THAT THEY CAN ACCESS IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR OWN HOME.

Source: National Online Safety Parent Survey - November 2018



2. Social Media

MOST PARENTS ARE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY VIA FAMILY MEMBERS. USE SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY, WHETHER IT'S SHARING RELEVANT ARTICLES/INFORMATION, ASKING QUESTIONS OR SIMPLY SHARING BEST PRACTICE THAT YOUR SCHOOL IS UNDERTAKING - SOCIAL MEDIA IS GREAT (WHEN USED IN THE RIGHT WAY).



3. Closed groups / chat apps

CLOSED GROUPS ON PLATFORMS SUCH AS FACEBOOK AND WHATSAPP ARE IDEAL FOR SHARING MESSAGES AND UPDATES ON A REGULAR BASIS, AS WELL AS REMINDING PARENTS OF ONLINE SAFETY GUIDANCE AND ACTIVITIES. WHEN CREATING A GROUP, IT'S WORTH CONSIDERING RULES AND ETIQUETTE GUIDES ABOUT WHAT CAN BE POSTED, AND INTRODUCE PROCESSES FOR APPROVING OR RESTRICTING COMMENTS.



4. Posters and infographics

SHARING POSTERS AND INFOGRAPHICS TO PARENTS VIA YOUR WEBSITE OR SOCIAL CHANNELS CAN MAKE ESSENTIAL ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION ENGAGING AND MEMORABLE. A WELL-DESIGNED INFOGRAPHIC CAN CATCH THE EYE, BREAK DOWN COMPLEX INFORMATION AND PRESENT IT IN A WAY THAT IS BOTH RELEVANT AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO YOUR COMMUNITY.



5. Email Newsletters

EMAIL COMMUNICATION IS GREAT FOR SHARING MORE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION FOR PARENTS TO LOOK AT IN ONE PLACE. IT'S ALSO A RELIABLE WAY OF KNOWING A MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED (AS YOU CAN TRACK IT). YOU CAN SEND MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS (OR MORE FREQUENT) UPDATES TO KEEP PARENTS CLUED UP ON THE LATEST EMERGING TRENDS AND NEWS RELATING TO THE ONLINE WORLD AND EVOLVING RISKS.



6. Blogs

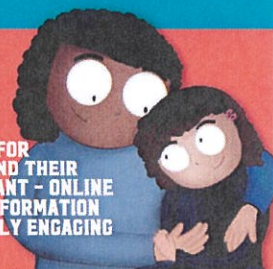
A BLOG IS A GREAT WAY TO DEVELOP A WHOLE SCHOOL CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION AND ALLOWS PARENTS TO HEAR DIRECTLY FROM SCHOOL STAFF AND PUPILS ON TOPICS INCLUDING ONLINE SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY TRENDS. WHY NOT CONSIDER HAVING A VARIETY OF AUTHORS, INCLUDING STAFF, PUPILS AND PARENTS TO FORM A BALANCED VIEW. IT MAY ALSO BE WORTH HAVING A DEDICATED AREA ON YOUR SCHOOL WEBSITE TO ONLINE SAFETY.



WWW.
https://

7. Online learning

WE TYPICALLY SEE AN ENGAGEMENT RATE OF 10% OR LESS FOR IN-PERSON ONLINE SAFETY SESSIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND THEIR PARENTS. TIME IS PRECIOUS AND ACCESSIBILITY IS IMPORTANT - ONLINE TRAINING TIPS MOST BOXES WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING INFORMATION READILY AVAILABLE TO YOUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN A REALLY ENGAGING AND INTERACTIVE WAY.



The Diana Award definition of bullying is "repeated negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe." Cyberbullying is bullying which takes place online. It can involve anything from sending messages to posting offensive comments to uploading and sharing private or embarrassing photos. It is classed as an indirect form of bullying when compared to verbal or physical bullying, given it usually takes place through a digital device. However, for those experiencing bullying behaviour, the consequences can be just as serious and have far reaching effects.

What schools need to know about CYBERBULLYING

3 KEY ASPECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

There are three key aspects of bullying behaviour, namely that it is repetitive, negative and intentional. These behaviours apply both offline and online. Cyberbullying can almost heighten these behaviours, particularly with access to the internet available 24/7 and the different ways in which those displaying bullying behaviour online can target others. The fact that they can also easily hide their identity online can make cyberbullying much more difficult to stop.

DIFFERENT DEVICES & CHANNELS

Cyberbullying can take place over any device connected to the Internet which allows for two-way communication. This includes mobile phones, tablets, computers and even games consoles as it becomes more and more common for players to chat to other players whilst playing online. From a snapshot of 1,400 students surveyed by the Diana Award in 2018, 33% of young people admitted to have experienced bullying on social media, 11% via text message and 12% whilst online gaming.

WHAT LEADS TO CYBERBULLYING

There is never any justification for cyberbullying and those who display bullying behaviour need to be held to account for their actions. Nonetheless, it can be useful to try and understand some of the factors that may lead young people into bullying behaviour. For example, family issues, personal difficulties and a lack of positive reinforcement may push some young children into bullying others as a form of coping mechanism. Similarly, those exhibiting bullying behaviour may blame their targets for provoking their behaviour in the first place or engage in bullying behaviour as a call for attention if they lack social skills or understanding. Others may view their position as dominant which makes themselves less vulnerable to being bullied or they replicate behaviour they have experienced themselves in the past.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Cyberbullying can affect anyone, at any time, at any place. The impacts of cyberbullying can be long-lasting and leave people feeling scared, anxious and lonely. Some of the more obvious signs that those experiencing bullying behaviour might show include weight loss, crying, mood changes, depression and regularly avoiding school. Other symptoms, which might be less obvious to spot and would be difficult to pick up on in isolation, may include changes in body language like hunched shoulders, walking slower or an inability to make eye contact. In extreme cases, those experiencing bullying behaviour may have unexplained marks or scars which could be evidence of self-harm.



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Tips for School Staff

TAKE A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

In taking a whole approach towards cyberbullying, schools can cultivate a culture that relies on positivity and behaviour that is emulated by ALL members of the school community including staff, support staff, senior leaders, governors and parents and carers.

BUILD CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

This can be achieved by having clear knowledge of what constitutes bullying behaviour, having clear sanctions and courses of action and continually updating your knowledge of safety procedures regarding online and offline incidents.

USE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS A RESOURCE

Ensure you understand what is influencing the behaviour of young people in your community. If schools know what their students are engaging with, it can be easier to develop and implement relevant and effective tactics / strategies to counter cyberbullying issues.

UNDERSTAND THE CAUSES OF BULLYING

As previously mentioned, sometimes those who are behind the bullying are in need of support just as much as those who being targeted. In better understanding the cause of the issue, schools can better position themselves to tackle the problem and also adequately support both those displaying and experiencing the bullying behaviour. Taking a proactive approach means that schools can gear themselves to tackle issues specific to their school environment, rather than treating each case the same.

ENSURE ALL STAFF KNOW THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a role to play in educating and supporting children who are affected by cyberbullying, not just those responsible for safeguarding or online safety. Regular training, continuous professional development and clear school policies can help to empower staff in effectively managing any cyberbullying issues and in providing a united staff front on zero tolerance to all bullying behaviour.

Ask For Help

For further support, advice or guidance to support you students at school, or to sign up to our FREE Anti-Bullying Ambassadors training events, head to www.antibullyingpro.com

Edt date: 29/05/19



Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images, videos and chat with friends through voice call or text message. Users can share images and videos directly to specific friends, or through a 'story' shared with their entire friend list, which documents the previous 24 hours. In a study, Snapchat was ranked the 4th most negative app in terms of having an impact on young people's health and wellbeing, with children feeling that they can use the app Snapchat to "make you look pretty."



What parents need to know about SNAPCHAT

EXPOSING YOUR CHILD'S EXACT LOCATION

The 'Snap Map' lets you share your EXACT location in real-time through a map on the app. The user's location updates when the app has been opened on the device. There is a warning on the Snapchat website about uploading images and videos to 'Our Story' stating that "snaps you submit to 'Our Story' can still show up on the Map, no matter which location setting you choose!" When uploading to 'Our Story', your child's image or video could appear in "Search results and Stories on or off Snapchat - today or in the future."

ADDICTIVE SNAPSTREAKS

'Snap Streaks' are gained when snaps have been sent back and forth consecutively between friends. The longer that snaps are sent between users, the longer the streak becomes. Furthermore, Snapchat rewards users who have achieved high Snap Streaks, by gifting emojis, adding incentives for users to keep the streaks. Children invest time into making their streaks as long as possible, which can put an incredible amount of pressure on both themselves and their friendships.

SEXTING

While Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and text disappear eventually, users still have the capability to screenshot or record anything which has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is possible and send a compromising image or message to somebody who they think they trust. Due to 'Snaps' disappearing, (users can even send a one-second photo or video), Snapchat has become the chosen platform for children and young people to send sexually explicit images or 'selfies'. Once a photo/video has been screenshotted, or recorded using another device or software, this can lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying.

It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves. However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed, but taking formal action isn't in the public interest.



EXTRAS TO MAKE YOU STAY

Aside from taking photos and videos, Snapchat has other elements to keep users coming back for more. 'Snap Games' is a feature within the app where users can play minigames with others on their friends list. The games function is easily accessed by tapping on the rocket button during a conversation. Another feature on the app is 'Snap Originals', which allows users to watch content created by Snapchat, celebrities and other accounts, including a mixture of comedy shows, drama, news and more. These features are designed to encourage users to stay on the app, which may be quite addictive.

DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE

Snapchat's selection of filters and lenses are seen as a great way to enhance your 'selfie game'. Although the filters are often created to promote entertainment and humour, using the 'beatify' filters on photos can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Children may strive for admiration and appreciation by sending these 'edited' photos to their friend list. Judging themselves against other users on the app might threaten their confidence or self-worth.



Top Tips for Parents



THE RISKS OF SEXTING

It can be slightly awkward talking about this topic with your child, but if it helps them protect themselves, it is worth it. Talk to them about the consequences of sexting and make sure that they're aware of the risks. Ensure your child knows that 'Snaps' can be screenshotted. Teach them that if they post anything potentially embarrassing or harmful (either of themselves or someone else) it can have severe consequences as the message, image or video can be shared further.

REPORTING A STORY, LENS, FILTER, SNAP OR MESSAGE

If your child comes across inappropriate Snapchat content sent directly to them or in another person's story, advise them to report it immediately. This may include an inappropriate lens, filter, message or snap. To report an offensive lens, they should open the app and select the lens they want to report. An info button will appear above the lens. Click this, followed by the flag icon. This will send a report to Snapchat for further investigation. Reports can also be made on the Snapchat support website: support.snapchat.com.

USE 'GHOST MODE'

We highly recommend enabling 'Ghost Mode' on the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map'. To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, change the setting to 'Ghost Mode'.

HOW TO DELETE A MESSAGE

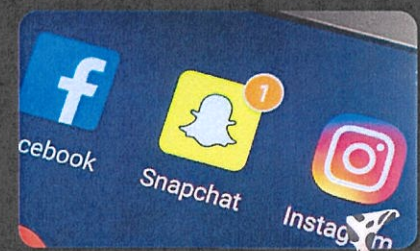
Advise your child never to send any negative messages (or images through gallery in the chat on the app) as screenshots can still be taken. You should also advise your child to screenshot any negative comments they receive as the sender can also delete them. To delete a message, simply press and hold the sent message and press delete.

TURN OFF 'QUICK ADD'

'Quick Add' helps friends find each other on the app. This is based on mutual friends or if their number is in their phone book. Explain to your child that this feature can open up their profile to strangers. We highly recommend that your child turns off the 'Quick Add' feature. This can be done in the settings.

RESTRICT STORY VIEWS

Your child can add videos and images to their 'Story' throughout the day which will last for 24 hours. By default, anyone in a user's friends list can see their story. We recommend checking the privacy settings to ensure that this has not been edited. This can simply be done in the app's settings under the 'Who Can View My Story' section. The options to choose from are 'My Friends', 'Everyone' or 'Custom' - we suggest that it is set to 'My Friends'.





Facebook is an online social media platform that has over 2 billion users across the globe. It was initially for university students but soon expanded out and since 2006, anyone over the age of 13 is able to join the platform. It is available on all devices from your desktop and laptop computer to smartphones and tablets. Users can add photos and videos, update their status, interact with others and catch up with the latest news. Despite requiring users to be over 13, there are no age verification measures and children can easily create an account. It's therefore important that parents familiarise themselves with the main features of the platform to ensure their young ones remain safe if and when they use it.



What parents need to know about FACEBOOK



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Facebook can be hugely addictive as it offers a physiological high and a quick reward cycle which comes from the likes and comments on shared posts. Communication is so instant now that teenagers are always checking, and it can sometimes feel like self-worth. This keeps children going back, encouraging them to post things and also increases the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) that is commonplace today. On the flip side, because of the way teenagers interact these days through Facebook and Facebook Messenger, they can seem addicted even when they're not.

CYBERBULLYING

Around a quarter of children have experienced online abuse, according to Ofcom's 2019 'Online Nation' report. Figures show that 23% have been cyberbullied, 39% subjected to abusive language and a fifth have been trolled. On Facebook, teenagers can receive communication in a number of ways, from private messages in Messenger to public comments on profiles, pages and posts to pages or groups set up just to torment a victim. Exclusion from pages or groups to cause the victim to feel left out has also been seen.

FUTURE IMPACT

Regardless of age, anything that's posted on Facebook, or other social media platforms, develops a personal brand and leaves a digital footprint that is there forever. It can be difficult to explain the consequences but many universities (and employers) look at Facebook before making a decision on accepting people. It is therefore wise to always think twice before posting anything online you wouldn't want people to hear or see offline.

STRANGERS/FAKE PROFILES

Generally, people are who they say they are online. That said, much like the real world, Facebook isn't free of malicious users and children have received friend requests from people they don't know, including individuals who may look to take advantage of young and impressionable children.

People you may know



OVERSHARING

Facebook encourages you to share "what's on your mind" but children need to be aware of what they're revealing about themselves online. Facebook allows users to share their location, create live videos and much more. Some photos can be traced using file data, too, so it's important to keep a tight group and share only with people you know.



INAPPROPRIATE ADS

While Facebook is getting ever stricter on the content of ads and who they are targeted to, there is still the chance that children could be subject to ads during their experience on the platform. This could be innocuous but is worth bearing in mind when using the app.



LIVE STREAMING

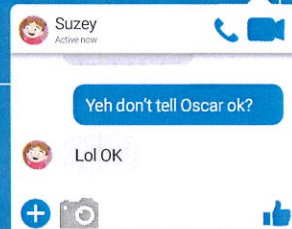
Facebook Live provides users with the ability to stream video live-time to their friends and followers or watch other people's broadcasts live. During the video, people can react and comment and it's difficult to moderate the content given everything happens in real-time. This could mean your child is exposed to inappropriate material or worse still, could be cajoled into doing something online by others which they wouldn't normally do.

LIVE

42 people watching

PRIVATE MESSAGING

Facebook Messenger is closely linked to your Facebook profile and provides the ability to share private messages away from friends and family. It is therefore important that parents ask their children who they are communicating with and ensure that the only people they are exchanging messages with are people that they also know in real life.



Safety Tips For Parents

MAKE PROFILES PRIVATE

Within the settings of a Facebook account, you can choose whether a profile is public or private. Make sure that your child's setting is switched to private. This way they will only be able to interact with friends and people they know within the platform.



LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Show your children how and why you use Facebook. This will help to demonstrate that it can be used safely when used in an appropriate manner and help to reduce the risk of them encountering harmful content.



SHARE DEVICES

Depending on the age of your children, it's worth considering letting them use Facebook from a general family iPad or laptop. This allows them to use it without being constantly connected everywhere they go and may give you more reassurance around what they are doing on the app.



REPORT VIOLATIONS

On Facebook you're able to hide people or groups and report things that are harmful. Make sure you spend some time to show your children how this works and why it's important to do so before they start spending serious time on the platform.



RESPECT BOUNDARIES

As with anything, there are potential risks and dangers on Facebook but once you've talked about the ideas of safety on the platform, give children some space. Trust them to make smart choices but always be open to talking about social media.



CHECK-IN

Once they've had some time to use the platform, don't be afraid to check in and see if there's anything on Facebook they'd like to discuss. This isn't always easy but being open with your children is the best way to deal with any issues head on.



Meet our expert

Alex Wright is a former Facebook employee and social media expert with over 15 years' experience working in digital media. He has worked with some of the biggest organisations in the world and has a wealth of knowledge in understanding how social media platforms work and how they engage their audience.



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SOURCES: <http://facebook.com>, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/social-media-addiction-young-children-under-five-youtube-instagram-a8953411.html>, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/cyberbullying-social-media-children-online-abuse-facebook-research-ofcom-ico-a8936366.html>, <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/how-social-media-affects-our-ability-to-communicate/>, <https://www.care.com/c/en-gb/stories/4275/5-dangers-of-social-media-to-discuss-with-you/>