

Online safety at home: parents and carers newsletter

With children and young people spending more time on their computers, phones and online doing their school work, playing games or watching videos. I wanted to write to highlight some of issues and risks which can come with the increased use of time online as it's important we all consider how we can support children's online safety. Technology is hugely valuable for education, as well as a way to keep in touch with friends and family.

Here's some information about what your child may enjoy online and what you can do to help keep them safer:

Sharing pictures

Using devices like phones and tablets to share pictures and videos can be a great way for children to have fun and stay in touch with friends and family. It's really important your child knows what's ok to share online and what they should check with you first.

Read [younger children sharing pictures or videos online](#) for more information on the risks and how to support safer sharing.

Watching videos

Children love to watch videos and YouTube is always a firm favourite! But sometimes children can be exposed to videos that are not meant for them. [YouTube Kids](#) is a safer way for children to explore their interests.

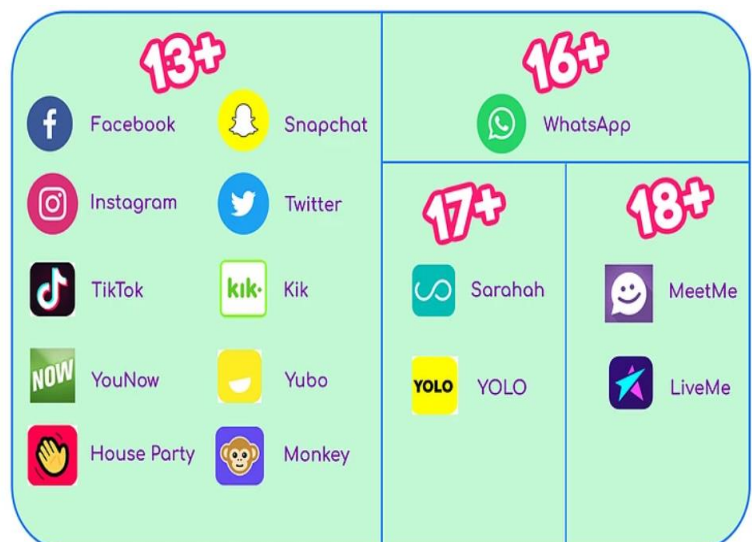
You can find more information about this on [YouTube: what parents need to know](#).

Netflix is also a favourite. With it having video for adults and children, it is important that the children are set their own profiles for viewing. These profiles need to be set as a child's profile so that it only shows them films and programs that are suitable for them.

Remember, primary-age children should be supervised at all times when online.

Social Media Apps

There are lots of apps that are currently circulating around such as **Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter or WhatsApp**, if you're able, it is important to speak to your child about the risks online. All of these apps include an element of children uploading photos or videos of themselves and without a clear understanding of the risk and issues these apps have. The children are at risk of acting unsafely online. Here are some apps and their age ratings that some of our children are currently using.



We are aware that even though these apps have an age rating above the children's age in our school, we currently have children who are using these apps on their phones.

Please be aware that the apps above do not filter as strictly as apps like Youtube and Netflix. Even with parental controls on to restricted mode and children profiles - the children can still have access to videos that are inappropriate and not meant for them.

These apps also work on a 2 way stream, meaning as well the children being able to receive data (watch videos, read post, see photos of others) they are also able to submit data (post videos, photos of themselves). On these apps, children are more at risk as they have a chance to put themselves out there through posting messages.

Please ask them to think before they post anything. Once posted they are almost impossible to take back. Whilst many of the posts are completely harmless, there are occasions where young people are posting inappropriate content. This is putting them at risk, so it's also important to speak to them to understand why they have done this. It could be done out of naivety or it could be something more, like bullying or harassment, so it is crucial they know where to go if they need help in any way.

Here is a link to check the age rating and also what the apps entails. It has reviews on the apps so you can find out a little more before deciding if it is an app for your child. <https://www.common sense media.org/>

Other steps you can take to help keep your child safer online

Parental controls: Parental controls have been designed to help you manage your child's online activities. There are various types, some of which are free but others which can be bought. However, nothing is totally fool proof so this shouldn't replace the support and guidance you give your child to help keep them safer. For more information and step by step instructions on setting up parental controls, visit [Parental Controls & Privacy Settings Guides - Internet Matters](#).

Supervise their online activity: Keep the devices your child uses in communal areas of the house such as the living room or kitchen, where an adult is able to supervise. Primary-age children should not access the internet in private spaces alone, such as in a bedroom or bathroom.

Explore together and chat little and often: Ask your child to show you their favourite apps, games and sites and encourage them to teach you how to use these. Ask them if anything ever worries them online. Make sure they know they won't be in trouble and can get help by talking to you or another adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried, sad or scared.