



Safeguarding Monthly Newsletter

FOCUS ON...



ONLINE SAFETY

WRITTEN BY [SERVICES FOR EDUCATION](#)

In this edition around ONLINE SAFETY, we'll look at:

- **Online Gaming** – *how can online gaming put our children at risk and what can we do about it?*

- **Controls without being 'controlling'** – *how to put locks and limits in place.*
- **Social Media** – *what do the age limits actually mean and what happens if they aren't followed?*
- **Top resources** to support keeping your children safe!



ONLINE GAMING

What can I do to make it safer for my child?

Online gaming can be a fantastic way for children and young people to have fun, connect with friends, and learn new skills. However, it's essential to ensure they're playing safely. Here are some key factors to consider:

Age Ratings and Content:

- **Check the age rating:** Make sure the games align with your child's age and maturity level.
- **Understand the content:** Be aware of the themes, violence, and language in the games they play.

Online Interactions:

- **Messaging and contact functions:** Discuss the risks of talking to strangers online and set boundaries for online communication.
- **In-game purchases:** Monitor in-game purchases to prevent unexpected spending.
- **Trolling and abuse:** Teach your child how to handle negative online behaviour and report it.

Safety and Support:

- **Reporting problems:** Show your child how to report issues within the game or to the platform.
- **Seek support:** Encourage them to talk to you or a trusted adult if they encounter any problems.

Remember:

- **Individual preferences:** What's suitable for one child may not be suitable for another.
- **Open communication:** Maintain an open dialogue with your child about their online gaming experiences.



KEEPING ON TOP OF CONTROLS AND LIMITS TO DEVICES AND SCREEN TIME

- **Explore the existing phone's parental controls** – both Androids and iPhones have them. Look into Apps- such as Life360 which help setup and monitor controls across multiple devices.

- ***Always set up kids' accounts*** – most apps/platforms allow you to set up different accounts- so ensure your children are playing from under-18 accounts. This can stop in-app spending, certain communication and allow parents to have overall control.
- ***Do your research into the apps your children are using*** – there are free and paid options. Most allow you to block certain sites etc and force your child to request permission before they download something.
- ***Have clear rules for using phones and devices*** – set clear boundaries and explain why there are rules. If your child breaks these, then have agreed consequences such as the removal of the phone for a limited time.
- ***Try to leave devices downstairs at bedtime*** – this can help children switch off and relax- which is conducive to better sleep and following this rule yourself is a healthy choice too!
- ***Take control over the WiFi, use it to your advantage*** – use your router to manage time spent online. Set it to turn off at a certain time of day and allow for some screen-free time!

➡ STAYING SAFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

What are the age restrictions on different platforms and why do they exist?

Social Media platforms have different age limits. These exist to safeguard children and to reduce the potential risks of online bullying, retrieval of inappropriate material and communication with unknown individuals. It is important to remember that these platforms are uncensored and unfortunately, as a direct result of social media in its various forms, some serious safeguarding incidents have occurred.

Please be aware of the age restrictions of the following platforms and monitor this as best you can:

Age limit	Possible risks and things to watch out for...
 TikTok 13+	TikTok, while a popular platform for self-expression and creativity, can also expose young users to inappropriate content. The app's algorithm often suggests videos that align with a user's interests, which can unintentionally lead to exposure to harmful or disturbing material. Additionally, TikTok's private messaging feature can create opportunities for unwanted contact from strangers.
 Snapchat	Snapchat poses several risks for young users. Exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, the sharing of location data through Snapchat Map, and the potential for unwanted contact from strangers are all concerns.

13+

Additionally, the app's disappearing message feature can create a false sense of security, leading to the sharing of content that could be harmful or distressing. The pressure to maintain "streaks" can also encourage excessive app usage and potentially unhealthy social interactions.



WhatsApp

13+

WhatsApp, while a popular communication tool, presents certain risks for children. The app's end-to-end encryption, while intended to protect privacy, can also make it difficult to monitor conversations.

Children may be exposed to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, or even grooming by strangers posing as peers. Additionally, the app's group chat feature can lead to cyberbullying or the sharing of harmful content. It's important for parents to be aware of these risks and to have open conversations with their children about safe online behaviour.



YouTube

13+

While YouTube can be brilliant for music, entertainment and keeping kids busy, it can also pose safeguarding risks for children. The platform's vast library of videos can expose children to inappropriate content, including violence, explicit language, and harmful stereotypes.

Additionally, the comment sections can be a breeding ground for cyberbullying and harassment. Children may also encounter targeted advertising that could lead to unwanted purchases or contact with strangers. It's essential for parents to be aware of these risks and to implement appropriate parental controls to protect their children online.



Facebook

13+

Facebook's vast user base and open nature can expose children to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and even grooming by strangers. Additionally, the platform's privacy settings can be complex, making it difficult for parents to monitor their child's activity. Children may also face pressure to share personal information or participate in risky online behaviours to fit in with their peers.



Instagram

13+

Instagram's focus on visual content can expose children to inappropriate images and videos, including harmful stereotypes and explicit material. Additionally, the platform's direct messaging feature can create opportunities for unwanted contact from strangers. Cyberbullying and harassment are also common issues on Instagram, with children facing pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards and share personal information.



Reddit

13+

Reddit's array of subreddits, or communities, can expose children to a wide range of content, including explicit material, harmful stereotypes, and cyberbullying. Reddit's anonymity can also create a sense of detachment, making it easier for users to engage in inappropriate behaviour. Children may also face pressure to conform to Reddit's unique culture and to participate in risky online activities.



ASKING FOR HELP

This is the CEOP button and this can be found all over the internet. This button is a tool for asking for help – whether it's trolling, online abuse, scams or fraud or unsafe communication. It is essential that children know how to find help online and report inappropriate content.



SUPER RESOURCES FOR YOU USE AND TO SHARE

- NSPCC – [Keeping children safe online](#)
- Safer Internet Centre – [Parents Guides and Resources](#)
- Internet Matters – [Online Safety Leaflets and Resources](#)
- CEOP – Education from the National Crime Agency – [Parents Page](#)