Online Safety Newsletter

February 2024

Welcome to our first Online Safety Newsletter of 2024. We hope you found some of the information in our previous issues useful.

If there are any particular topics you would like covered in these newsletters, please let us know.

SAVE the DATE
Safer Internet Day
2024 | **Tuesday 6 February**
www.saferinternetday.org

Safer Internet Day, on the 6th February, is the UK's biggest celebration of online safety. Each year an online issue or theme is the focus of this day, which is based on the things young people are seeing and experiencing online. Created in consultation with young people across the UK, this year Safer Internet Day will be focusing on change online, this includes covering:

- Young people's perspective on new and emerging technology
- Using the internet to make change for the better
- The changes young people want to see online
- The things that can influence and change the way young people think, feel and act online and offline

In school this week, the children will be learning about keeping themselves safe online and also how they should behave towards others whilst online. Please talk to your child about online safety and the things they have discussed in school this week.

You can find out more about Safer Internet Day by visiting: https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2024

LEGO FORTNITE – PEGI 7

Lego Fortnite is free to play (in game purchases are available though). The game has been rated as PEGI 7, meaning that the content is suitable for children over the age of 7. However, you should be aware that this game can be played with up to seven people (or solo). Lego Fortnite is only accessible on Fortnite, so you must download the main game. When setting up an account, if your child is under the age of 13, then they will be given a 'cabined account,' therefore certain features will be disabled (such as communicating with other players) unless you override them.

Please ensure you set the parental controls as appropriate for your child; we also recommend setting the appropriate settings on the console itself.

There are two worlds available called Survival or Sandbox. You can find out more about each world using the link below so you can decide which would be best for your child: https://www.lego.com/en-gb/themes/fortnite/lego-fortnite-parents-guide?

YouTube ▶ YouTube

YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13 (however, children of all ages may use the Service and YouTube Kids if enabled by a parent/legal guardian).

What if my child is under the age of 13?
If your child is under the age of 13 then your child should use either YouTube Kids or a supervised account. Which option you choose, will depend on your child's age and your requirements.

YouTube Kids – this is a separate app that includes a smaller selection of videos based on the age you select:
- Preschool (ages four and under)
- Younger (ages 5–8)
- Older (ages 9–12)

Supervised accounts
This is a parent-managed version of YouTube. You can select one of the following options, again depending on your child's age and your requirements:
- Explore - Generally for viewers aged 9+.
- Explore more - Generally for viewers aged 13+
- Most of YouTube - This setting includes almost everything on YouTube except for videos marked as 18+ and other videos that may not be appropriate for viewers using supervised experiences.

Google have created a table to show the differences between YouTube Kids and a supervised account to help in your decision:
https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420

Posting videos
You should be over 13 to post videos. If your child does post videos on YouTube, ensure they understand what information they should keep private and what to do if they receive negative comments.
Talk to them about the different settings available:
1. Public: anyone can view the video.
2. Private: video can only be viewed by users that you select.
3. Unlisted: only people who have the link to the video can view it.

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802244

Parents and carers | CEOP Education
Access information and resources for parents and carers on keeping your child safer online including...
🌐 thinkuknow.co.uk

ONLINE SAFETY BILL

The Online Safety Bill is a new set of laws to protect people online. These laws will make social media companies more responsible for the safety of their users on their platforms.
The Government has created a guide to the new laws detailing how they will protect children and adults. For example, the new laws mean social media companies will have to show how they are enforcing age limits.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-the-online-safety-bill

Fake Profiles and Cyberbullying

Setting up a profile impersonating somebody else with the intention of being unkind to others or to cause embarrassment to the individual is a form of cyberbullying.

If your child has set up a fake profile, talk to them about how this is a form of bullying and therefore not acceptable.

It is important that we talk to our children about the issue of cyberbullying and let them know that if they are ever a victim of it then it is not their fault, and they should tell you (or a trusted adult) straightaway.
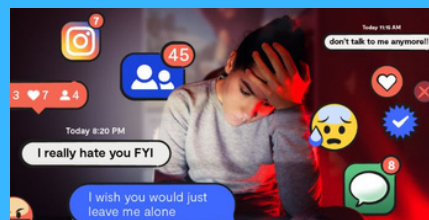
Talk to your child about reporting and blocking tools on social media or online games and show them how to use them to report any form of bullying.
You can read more about cyberbullying here:
https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/

Additionally, **Report Harmful Content** have listed how you can report impersonation accounts on the different social media networks:
https://reportharmfulcontent.com/advice/impersonation/

DISCORD 13+

Discord is a free communication platform that lets users text, talk, video chat and share screens with one another.

Users can engage with either public or private spaces based on a particular theme or topic.
The public servers (servers are like message boards) are accesible to anyone which means what your child posts can be seen by anyone that enters that space.
The private servers are only accesible to approved users, meaning children can set up their own server for people they know, or can join a friend's server.

Is Discord safe?
Your child could come across inappropriate or harmful content.
They can communicate with strangers and so could be at risk of abuse or grooming.

Safety Features
Keep me safe: this feature automatically scans and deletes direct messages that are inappropriate.
Manage Private Messages: there are different settings to manage who can contact your child on this platform.
Manage friend requests: you can decide if this should be everyone, friends of friends or server members.

SWIGGLE
CHILD FRIENDLY SEARCH ENGLINE

This is an ad-free search engine designed specifically for young children taking their first steps on the internet.

Powered by Google Custom Search, the results are filtered using Google SafeSearch and educational resources are prioritised. They also filter the search terms to check that Swiggle is not being used to search for inappropriate content.

Access this at: https://swiggle.org.uk/

Minecraft

Minecraft is a virtual 'sandbox' game. Players build their own virtual worlds and experiences using building blocks or resources. They work their way up through basic resources to more complex ones and eventually they can eventually build their world in whatever way they want.

What are the risks?
Joining a public network (called a server) lets your child potentially interact with strangers through text chat. Some servers focus on building while others are dedicated to role-play encouraging direct interaction.

Griefing
Some people in Minecraft delight in purposefully damaging or destroying another player's creation. This is called 'griefing' and is a form of bullying as players intentionally spoil someone else's game by deleting hours of their work and forcing them to start from scratch. Many public servers treat griefing as a severe offence and frquently ban offenders.

Addictiveness
Minecraft's gameplay is relatively simple and the outcome (e.g. when a child has built something from new) can be extremely rewarding. This can make the game highly additctive. It is easy to lose track of time while playing Minecraft, causing committed young players to forget about other activities such as homework or enjoying family time. Putting a time limit on their gaming can prevent this.

Additional Purchases
After initally buying the game , players can make optional extra purchases for cosmetic items and other bonuses. Minecraft Realms is an optional online subscription (requiring regular payments) that lets users run a multiplayer server to play with their friends. This can become expensive.

Advice for parents:
Choose the right mode - Selecting 'Creative' or 'Peaceful' mode allows children to play without having to contend with enemies.
Host a private server - Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it and allows you to decide who can enter/interact with your child.
Talk about strangers - It is essential you talk to your child about online safety and what to do it anything happens online, or if they are asked to share personal information.

Online Safety support and advice from school

If you have any concerns about online safety, and would like to talk to a member of staff, please contact your child's school:

Stifford Clays:	**admin@scp.swecet.org**
Chadwell St Mary:	**admin@csm.swecet.org**
Deneholm:	**admin@dps.swecet.org**