

Internet Safety

Today was Safer Internet Day which is celebrated across the world in schools and at home. The theme for this year's Safer Internet Day is 'Want to talk about it.' E-safety is an integral part of children's education in today's digital world and is embedded in their learning at school. We want to help our parents and children improve their own understanding of e-safety issues and learn to use the internet and all digital media in a safe and secure way.

As a parent, you will know how important the internet is to children - they use it to learn, play, socialise and express themselves. It is a highly creative place of amazing opportunities. The technology children use every day can seem a bit daunting and you might worry about the risks your child can face online - such as bullying, contact from strangers or the possibility of them seeing illegal or inappropriate content. However, there are many simple ways to protect your children online and decrease the risks they face. We encourage you to engage with your children regarding their use of the internet while at home. Here are some conversation starter ideas:

- Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.
- Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?
- Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.
- Encourage them to help. Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.

Social Media and Apps

Children and young people are beginning to access many different social media and messaging apps and sites. The most common with our children are WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok, with many others such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter also being used.

However, for children and young people there are risks that you should be aware of in order to help keep your child safe online.

Some of the possible risks of using social media at a young age are: group messaging, oversharing, sharing their locations, talking to people they don't know, sending or receiving inappropriate content, unrealistic sense of body image or reality, online bullying and obsessive focus on like and comments.

These social media and messaging apps are all age restricted in order to keep children safe from these possible risks with **an age rating of 13+ (however WhatsApp is 16+)**.

For more information and support, please refer to NSPCC - Keeping children safe - online safety on social media.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/>