

SAFEGUARDING NEWS

ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL

AUTUMN TERM

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Digital Safeguarding is an important part of our work to keep children safe.



As Christmas draws near, many children may be looking forward to receiving new electronic devices or games, so we feel that this is an appropriate time to remind you of simple online safety tips to help parents/carers make safer choices and support their children online.

Talk to your children:

Take an active interest in your child's online life and engage in the digital world with them.

Let your children teach you about their online world and how they use technology; playing new games and exploring websites together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.

Make sure your children know that you are safe and approachable; remind them that they can tell you if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable, without being told off or punished.

Setting boundaries:

Much like the 'real world', parents need to set boundaries for children online; this provides them with a clear understanding of the limits, expectations and consequences of their behaviour.

Agree as a family, how the internet and technology will be used in your home; encourage children to use the online safety messages they learn in school and adapt these into your own family rules.

Discuss online boundaries too; if your child loves to socialise online, talk to them about what is and isn't appropriate to share with their friends online.

Remember to role-model positive behaviour online; consider asking your child's permission before posting photos of them on social media this Christmas and empower them to have control over their 'digital reputation'.

Make informed choices:

It is vital that we fully understand the capabilities and make informed decisions about new games, apps and devices, before giving them to children as a gift.

Do your research; ask the shop about pre-installed apps or tools and check whether the device or game has an online component, which allows them to connect with others online.

Always check the PEGI age rating and descriptors on games before buying them for your child and carefully consider whether the content is appropriate for them.

Familiarise yourself with the privacy, safety and security tools on new devices; ensure you are in a position to teach your child how to make their accounts private and how to block and report other people online.

Filters and Parental Controls:

Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to illegal, unwanted or unpleasant content online, but there are some simple steps you can take at home to help minimise this risk.

Make sure you install anti-virus software, filters and parental controls on your child's device before giving it to them.

Ensure that you are role-modelling good behaviour by using strong passwords yourself; make them difficult to guess and don't share them with your children.

Remember that blocks and filters are not 100% effective and you can't rely on them alone to protect your children, so remind them to tell you if they see something upsetting online.



What age can my child start social networking?

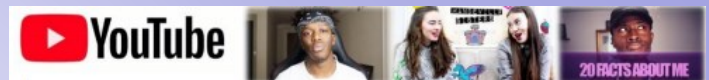
As a parent it's important you know that all social networking platforms (apps) have age limits. Some social networks use technologies that mightn't be right for some ages, or engage with communities that are made up of people much older than your child.

What are the risks of an underage social networking account?

- Many sites include an instant message function which allows private conversations
- Most social networking sites have an app version, meaning your child will have access to the social network from their smartphone/tablet. Some app versions of social networks use the location of the phone.
- Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may spread.
- It isn't easy to take back information that has been posted – and can be impossible if it's already been shared.
- Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are. Chatrooms and forums can connect people who are complete strangers and can be unmoderated.
- Chatrooms and forums are one of the places online groomers go to connect with children. They can also be places where people use a lot of sexual language and engage in online flirting. This is sometimes done through video chat programs.

YouTube and our children: a new kind of celebrity

There's no doubt that YouTube provides an amazing opportunity for children to learn. How many times have we, as adults, found ourselves watching a tutorial on how to do something? It's an invaluable source which can play a huge role of the lives of our children, with many fan-following YouTubers, aspiring to become them and even posting video content themselves.



How can I tell which 'YouTubers' are safe for my child to follow and which are not?

The BBC have created an online resource called 'Own It' aimed at helping children and young people to manage their online lives safely and have recruited a team of 'celebrity vloggers' to give their message. These stars (including Eman Kellman, Grace Mandaville and Scola) use this channel to give really positive messages and is worth a view with older children too.

So, are YouTube channels a negative thing? Lots of inappropriate content can be found on YouTube - children can easily be drawn into content which is not age appropriate; however, there are lots of positive YouTube channels that can help children to learn new skills, develop understanding and empathy and engage in world issues.

As YouTube do say children should be 13 or over, if you do choose to allow your child to use it under your supervision, we advise following these steps:

- Turn on Restricted mode – this restricts availability of mature content
- Watch alongside from time to time to get a feel for the channels
- Ensure your child knows how to report content and understands they can talk to you if they see anything upsetting online

YouTube Kids is also available with the option to select the shows you prefer your child to watch, however inappropriate content has also been found on here too so please use caution. Services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and BBC iPlayerKids are a great alternative containing lots of children's programmes.

My child wants to share on social media. Should I be worried?

YouTube (along with other social media platforms) should NOT be used by those under the age of 14 due the associated risks of comments on the videos they post and feedback from viewers which may not always be positive or appropriate.