

Online Safety Update [Y5/6]



Dear Parent/Carer,

Online safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Hesleden Primary School. Online Safety is taught to all children through computing and PSHE curriculum sessions, and our curriculum empowers children to understand and be aware of how they can act to stay safe and behave appropriately online. We can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you.

Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep themselves safe and behave appropriately online. It is important that we are all vigilant when children are using technology and act to ensure they are protected from people who may pose a risk to them. Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to unpleasant, unwanted or illegal content, comments or activity online and there are steps you can take at home to minimise this risk.

We know that new apps and sites appear daily online and it would be unrealistic to ask parents and carers to understand all of them. The sites and services that your child likes to use may change regularly, but the messages they need to keep themselves safe will remain the same – think before you post, be kind online and ask for help if something makes you feel worried, upset or uncomfortable.

Recently, in school, we have been dealing with some unpleasant and inappropriate behaviour from some of our older children. This has included nasty comments and threats via social media, and unkind posts and emojis/gifs in group chats. Children have been understandably upset, and dealing with these issues takes time away from learning in class.

We have spoken to the children involved, and their parents, and PCSO Goodwin has spoken to the children about the seriousness of such online activity. He said that at 10 years old, the age at which they can be held legally responsible for their actions, there may also be associated consequences.

We appreciate that the children quite often know more about technology and apps than we do, but the message to parents to help them stay safe is the same: be vigilant, monitor their use, and help them to always be kind. Children in this school are too young to be legally using many of the apps and sites they use (see grid below), so the following pages have some tips for parents on how to keep children safe – to help them not be the victim, or the perpetrator, of inappropriate behaviour.

If we can support you, or your children, in any way through school, or signposting to other services, please get in touch.

Regards,

Mrs Dunn
7.12.21

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

Under 13	13+	16+	17+
Roblox	Twitter	TikTok	WhatsApp
PopJam	Facebook and Messenger	Skype	Telegram Messenger
FaceTime	Viber	Google Hangouts	Tumblr
	WeChat	Reddit	
	Monkey	Snapchat	
	Yubo	Pinterest	
	Dubsmash		Line
	Instagram		Sarahah
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Sourced from NSPCC website October 2019

Tips for Parents – Keeping Children Safe Online

If your child wishes to download a new app then we'd recommend considering some of the following points:

Listen

- Take an active interest in your child's online life and talk with them about how they use technology.
 - Ask your child why they want to use the app? How did they hear about it?
- Discuss with them how they will keep themselves safe and make sure they know:
 - How to block and report other users and content
 - To speak to a trusted adult if they see anything or something happens online that makes them feel worried, upset or uncomfortable.
 - About websites such as ChildLine and CEOP? www.childline.org.uk and www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Functionality

- Make sure that you understand how the app works so you can decide if you are happy for your child to use it. You may even wish to set up an account yourself first.
- Consider:
 - Does it allow video chat or the sharing of images?
 - Does it allow user to communicate with 'random' strangers?
 - Does it allow anonymous chat?
 - Does it allow in-app purchases?
 - Can you restrict access to the content that your child shares?
 - How will your child's personal data be used by the app?

Reviews

- What do other people (i.e. other parents and carers) have to say about the app?
 - Ask your friends and family members or take a look online. You may be able to find reviews via search engines or using tools such as www.net-aware.org.uk and www.common sense media.org

Age Restrictions

- You can usually find age restrictions within the apps terms and conditions. This is not the same as the app/google store rating.
- The age limit for many popular social networking sites is thirteen. This is due to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). The age limit is not based on suitability of content and instead applies to any website, app or online service which collects, stores or uses children's personal information. Some apps will have age limits of 18+ as they are exclusively designed for use by adults.
- If children use apps that are aimed at an older age group then this may leave them vulnerable to being exposed to unsuitable content (including advertising), as well as being contacted by strangers.

Safety

- Many popular apps will have ‘help’ and ‘safety’ sections, either within the app itself or via its website. Some apps will even have content specifically designed for parents and carers.
 - <https://www.internetmatters.org/> has some useful parent guides which highlight safety tools on popular devices, and signpost to report mechanisms.
- Does the app have any privacy settings? If so then help your child to apply them appropriately – for example is it possible to set the app so that only trusted friends can see information they post?
- Explore the block and report features. Can your child block or report concerning users or inappropriate behaviour?
- If the app doesn’t have safety or help sections or doesn’t provide the ability to report and block then you may wish to consider if it is safe for your child to use.

Boundaries

- Talk to your child about safe and appropriate online behaviour.
- Consider setting up a family agreement regarding how their internet use will be supervised and how long they can spend online. Resources to help can be found at www.childnet.com and www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/
- Apply appropriate parental controls to all devices: www.saferinternet.org.uk and www.internetmatters.org
- Discuss your expectations about the types of content and information they should share online, rules relating to adding friends and meeting people in real life.
- Do they understand:
 - That content posted online should never be considered to be private and may be copied and shared?
 - That they should behave online the same as they would in “the real world” and be kind?
 - How to be secure online such as by using safe and strong passwords. You can visit www.getsafeonline.org.uk for more advice

If you are worried that your child is at risk of harm or criminal offence has been committed then you can report your concerns to the Police or Children’s Social Care. Please do not notify suspicious profiles of your actions, as this could enable them to delete material which might be required for any Police investigations. You can contact the Police via 101 or via 999 if there is an immediate risk to a child’s safety. You can also report online sexual abuse to CEOP by visiting www.ceop.police.uk and using the “Click CEOP” reporting button.