

Online Safety Newsletter

December 2022



Instagram

Is your child on Instagram? **You should be over 13 years of age to set up an account.**

Instagram is used to post photos and videos. Users can also DM (direct message), send disappearing messages, add to their stories (these disappear after 24 hours) and broadcast live.

Instagram have now introduced new age verification software to help confirm the age of users. Any user who tries to change their age will have to upload an ID document or take a video selfie. You can find out more here:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/instagram-rolls-out-age-verification-for-users>

Personalised Digital Toolkit

Answer some simple questions and get age specific advice and recommendations:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-family->

Parental controls

With Christmas nearly here and perhaps with presents including new technology or related games being received, we thought we'd provide you with a little reminder of how to set up appropriate parental controls.

Games/consoles

First, check the PEGI rating of any new games to ensure that your child is old enough to be playing them. PEGI provides age classifications for games and **considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.**

It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration the chat facilities within games. If a game does allow your child to communicate with others then you can adjust the settings so they are appropriate to your child - or disable it completely.

Secondly, for any consoles (new and old), it is important to set up appropriate controls such as restricting spending limits and again managing who they can communicate with. Follow the links below to find out how to set up Parental Controls for each device:



Xbox:

<https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming>

PS5:

<https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/>

Nintendo Switch:

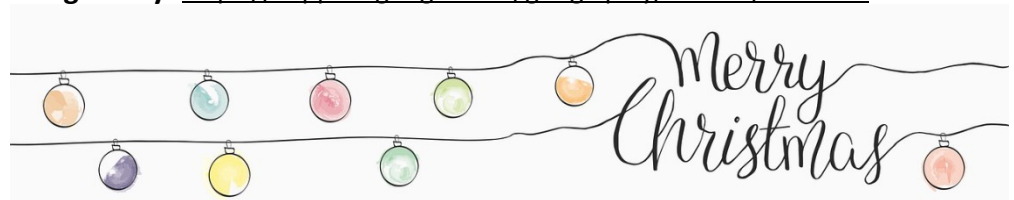
<https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.html>

Tablets/Smart phones

As well as setting up parental controls on the device itself, remember to check any apps your child would like on their device. Is it suitable for their age? Review all settings and privacy options for each app. For the devices themselves use the available settings to prevent purchases, restrict content viewed and adjust privacy settings. Follow the links below to find out more:

iPhones/iPads: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304>

Google Play: <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738>



Online Sexual Abuse



Talking to our children about online sexual abuse can be difficult, which is why the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) have developed the TALK checklist. You can access the checklist here:

<https://talk.iwf.org.uk/>

The TALK checklist covers:

T = Talk to your child

A = Agree ground rules

L = Learn about what your child is doing online

K = Know how to use apps and tools to help keep your child safe online

If you download the full resource, it also discusses why children with SEND may be at greater risk, how to deal with difficult questions and ground rules that you could set.

Unwanted sexual advances on social media

Report Harmful Content detail how you can report unwanted sexual advances on the more popular social networking sites below:

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/advice/unwanted-sexual-advances/>

CEOP advice

CEOP have published several articles providing further information:

What is sexual abuse?

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/What-is-sexual-abuse>

Finding out your child has been sexually abused:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Finding-out-your-child-has-been-sexually-abused-or-exploited/>

How can the law help me?

Whilst we wait for the Online Safety Bill to be passed, which will hopefully improve Online Safety, there are certain laws already established to help protect us online. For example, in the UK we have the Malicious Communications Act 1988 that states it is an offence to send a communication that conveys an indecent or grossly offensive message or a threat. We also have the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which covers threatening behaviour or harassment online.

Report Harmful Content have curated a list of laws that are relevant to online behaviour here:

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/when-should-you-go-to-the-police/>



Mental Health

If your child is experiencing mental health issues, then it's important to know that there are organisations set up to help those who need support with their mental health. The NHS website sets out when you should seek professional help for your child, as well as links to online organisations. In addition, ChildLine and Calms can offer support and advice.

Find out more here:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-for-young-people/children-young-people-mental-health-services-cypmhs-parents-carers-information/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>
- <https://www.thecalmzone.net/get-support>

CEOP: Updated 11-18 website

CEOP Education have updated and created one area for all 11 – 18 year olds to access. This website replaces the previously separated areas for 11-13s and 14+. You can find out more here:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/our-views/2022/our-new-website-for-young-people-aged-11-18/>

Screen time advice

We're often asked how long children should spend on their devices each day. Childnet have created a blog discussing why it is difficult to specify a limit and what you should consider. You can read it here:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/screen-time-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>

Anti-Bullying Week 2022

The theme this year was Reach Out. The Anti Bullying Alliance have worked with Kidscape to develop resources to help you support your child:

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying->

Twitter: new feature

You must be 13+ to join Twitter.

Twitter have introduced a new feature called Twitter Circle. Twitter circles allows you to send Tweets to people you have chosen to be in your Twitter Circle. Only those in your Twitter Circle can reply to the Tweets you share in the circle.

You can read more about this feature here:

<https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/twitter-circle>



Roblox – updated PEGI rating

PEGI have announced a change to the age rating for Roblox. PEGI used to rate Roblox as 7+, however because of the huge level of user generated content within Roblox, PEGI have changed the rating to a Parental Guidance label (icon shown right). You can read more about this change here:

<https://pegi.info/news/pegi-changes-rating-advice-roblox>



What is Roblox?

You can either use Roblox to create games or play games that other users have created. **As a lot of the content is user generated, it may mean not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play. It is important to set up Parental controls appropriate to your child.**

Allowed Experiences - NEW

Roblox has introduced Allowed Experiences, which allows you to select age-appropriate experiences, so your child can only join experiences that match their age set. Please note that experiences above the age restriction set may be seen in search results. Age categories available are 9+, 13+ and all ages. You can find out how to set up Allowed Experiences here:

<https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/8863284850196-Allowed-Experiences-Controls>

What should I be aware of?

Chat Facility - Players can chat to each other on Roblox. You can add parental controls to turn this feature off completely or add restrictions.

Virtual Currency - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories. If you do not want your child to purchase them, then ensure you set the Monthly Spend Restriction to zero.

Game content – as mentioned, games are created by different users so sometimes the content may not be appropriate for your child.

Blocking users and reporting – ensure your child knows how to do this.

What should I do?

- Play the game with your child.
- Explore the parental controls within Roblox and set as appropriate.
- Show your child how to use the Report Abuse system within Roblox to report inappropriate content and how to block other users.

Further information:

- <https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>

Discord

Discord is a social networking app used by gamers to **chat to each other**. There can be in app purchases through Discord's premium subscription service. The minimum age to access Discord is 13. The Apple App store rates it as 17+. Discord is made up of servers, which are spaces for groups to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anybody can set up a server and they can either be public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or groups.

Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat about the game (**rather than the game's own chat facility**).

How can I make it safer?

Discord have created this article, which outlines four steps to creating a safer account, including how to block users.

- <https://discord.com/safety/360043857751-Four-steps-to-a-super-safe-account>

What do I need to be aware of?

We always encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use different apps/websites and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. It is important to be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered. **Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord as well as inappropriate language.** Discord have produced this article, which answers common questions:

- <https://discord.com/safety/360044149591-answering-parents-and-educators-top-questions>

Further information

- <https://www.childnet.com/blog/what-is-discord-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

Social Media Algorithms

Parent Zone have written this article explaining how algorithms work on social media. Algorithms influence what we see on social media platforms and predict what type of content we are most likely to interact with, thereby keeping us online for longer. There are benefits but unfortunately there are negatives, which are outlined in the below article:

<https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/more/articles/what-are-social-media-algorithms-and-how-can-they-be-manipulated>



Yubo

Yubo is a social network, which you must be over 13 years of age to join **although the App store rate it as 17+**. Those aged 13 to 18 years old must have parental permission and will join a separate Yubo community that is for under-18s. Yubo do use an age-verification system (you must take a photo of your face and then facial age estimation technology is used to check).

You make 'friends' by swiping right on someone's profile picture and if they do the same on yours then you can chat with them or stream live videos. **Due to the nature of this app, your child may come across content that is not appropriate to them.** If your child does use this app, then ensure they know how to use the app's reporting facilities and know how to block other users.

What do I need to be aware of?

Location: Users have the choice to share their location. You can hide/show your location at any time (country will always be visible). Location is disabled for all users under 18.

Live Streaming: - this is when somebody broadcasts live (real time).

Inappropriate Content

YuBucks - Yubo's official Currency, can be used to gain additional functionality.

Guides

Yubo have created the following guides, we would recommend reading them before you allow your child to access this app. If you do not think this app is appropriate for your child, then talk to them and tell them why and what your concerns are.

For Parents: <http://parents-guide.yubo.live/>

For Teens: <http://teens.yubo.live/>

Checklist

SWGfL and the UK Safer Internet Centre in collaboration with Yubo have created this checklist.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/introducing-the-yubo-social-media-checklist>