



WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging apps in the world, with more than 1.5 billion people in more than 180 countries using it to send and receive text, photos, videos and documents, as well as make voice and video calls through an Internet or Wi-Fi connection. The free app offers end-to-end encryption, which means that messages can only be read by the sender and the recipient in one-to-one chats, or all members if it is a group chat. Not even WhatsApp can read them.



AGE RESTRICTION
16+



What parents need to know about

WhatsApp



AGE LIMIT CHANGE

Since May 2018, the minimum age for using WhatsApp is 16 years old if you live in the European Union, including the UK. Prior to this, the minimum age was 13, which still applies for the rest of the world. WhatsApp has not yet stated whether it will take action against anyone aged between 13 and 16 who already hold accounts under the old terms and conditions, such as closing their account or seeking parental permission.

SCAM MESSAGES

Occasionally on WhatsApp, people receive spam messages from unauthorised third parties or from fraudsters pretending to offer prizes to 'lucky people', encouraging recipients to click on a link to win a prize. A common scam involves messages warning recipients that their WhatsApp subscription has run out with the hope that people are duped into providing their payment details. Other scam messages include instructions to forward the message in return for a reward or gift from WhatsApp or another person.

FAKE NEWS AND HOAXES

WhatsApp has been linked to enabling the spread of dangerous viral rumours. In India, for example, a number of attacks appear to have been sparked by false rumours shared on WhatsApp.

THE 'ONLY ADMIN' FEATURE AND CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the act of sending threatening or taunting text messages, voice messages, pictures and videos, with the aim to hurt and humiliate the receiver. The group chat and group video call features are great for multiple people to chat simultaneously, but there is the potential for people to hurt others with their comments or jokes. The 'only admin' feature gives the admin of a group chat greater control over who can send messages. Whilst this can be good for one-way announcements, the group admin has the power to block somebody from responding to an offensive message in a chat, which could result in a child being upset and unable to reply.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

To start a chat in WhatsApp, you need to know the mobile number of the contact you want to speak to and they also need to have the app downloaded. WhatsApp can find contacts by accessing the address book of a device and recognising which of these contacts are using WhatsApp. If your child has shared their mobile number with some body they don't know, they can use it to get in touch via WhatsApp.

LIVE LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp's 'Live Location' feature enables users to share their current location in real time to their contacts in a chat, allowing friends to share their whereabouts. The feature, which can be found by pressing the 'attach' button, is described by WhatsApp as a 'simple and secure way to let people know where you are.' Location sharing is already a common feature on other social apps, including Snapchat's Snap Map and Facebook Messenger and can be a useful way for a child to let loved ones know they are safe. However, if your child is in a group chat with people they do not know, they will be exposing their location.



National
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Top Tips for Parents



CREATE A SAFE PROFILE

Even though somebody would need your child's phone number to add them as a contact, as an extra security measure we suggest altering their profile settings to control who can see their profile photos and status. The options to choose from are 'Everyone', 'My Contacts' and 'Nobody'. We suggest selecting 'My Contacts' or 'Nobody' to ensure their profile is protected.

EXPLAIN HOW TO BLOCK PEOPLE

If your child has received spam or offensive messages, calls or attachments from a contact, they should block them. Messages and status updates sent by a blocked contact will not show up on the phone and will stay undelivered. Blocking someone will not remove this contact from the contact list - they will need to be removed from the phone's address book. To block a contact, your child needs to open the person's chat stream and tap on the settings.

REPORT SCAM MESSAGES

Advise your child not to tap, share or forward any message that looks suspicious or sounds too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they will be given the option to report the number as spam directly inside the chat. They can also report a contact or a group as spam using the following steps: 1) Open the chat. 2) Tap on the contact or group name to open their profile information. 3) Scroll to the bottom and tap 'Report Spam'.

LEAVE A GROUP

If your child is part of a group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable or has been added to a group they don't want to be part of, use the group's settings to show them how to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once. If they leave again, they cannot be added again.

USING LIVE LOCATION SAFELY

If your child needs to use the 'Live Location' feature to share with you or a friend, advise them to only share it for the amount of time they need to. WhatsApp gives the options of either 15 minutes, one hour or eight hours. However, your child can choose to stop sharing at any time.

DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES

If your child has sent a message to the wrong chat or if a message they sent has contained a mistake, they can delete it. To do this, simply tap and hold on the message, choose 'Delete' and then 'Delete for everyone'. The app allows seven minutes to delete the message after it has been sent, but it is important to remember that recipients may have seen and screenshot a message before it was deleted.

SET TIME LIMITS

A 2017 study found that by the age of 14 the average child will have sent more than 55,000 texts, 30,000 WhatsApp messages and racked up more than three solid weeks of video chat. Although it is inevitable that your child will use technology, you can still set boundaries. This is not easy, especially since teens use their devices for both schoolwork and free time, often simultaneously.



AGE RESTRICTION
12+

FORTNITE BATTLE ROYALE

'Fortnite - Battle Royale' is a free to play section of the game 'Fortnite'. The game sees 100 players dropped on to an island from a 'battle bus,' where they have to compete until one survivor remains. The last remaining player on the island wins the game. Players have to find hidden items, such as weapons, to help them survive longer in the game. To make the game more challenging, there is an added twist called 'the storm' which reduces the size of the island from the start of gameplay, bringing the players closer together in proximity. The game is available on PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Mac and iOS.



What parents need to know about FORTNITE: BATTLE ROYALE

MICROTRANSACTIONS

Newly featured items are released daily and are only available to purchase within 24 hours of their release. These are cosmetic items, called 'skins', 'gliders' and 'emotes', which change the characters' appearance, but do not improve the game play. Once purchased, the player has full use of these in the future. The designs are attractive for players to purchase and even celebrities are endorsing them. Also available to purchase in the game is a 'Battle Pass'. When a new 'Battle Pass' is released, users can take part in a series of challenges, receiving more rewards (cosmetics) by progressing through different tiers. Whichever rewards they achieve can then be used in the game.

HACKER ATTACKS

News site Forbes stated that it had seen "dozens" of online reports from people who said their accounts had been compromised by hackers, who had gained access to user's accounts in the game and accrued hundreds of pounds in fraudulent charges.

NO PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED

Signing up to the game is relatively simple. Users have the option to log in with either their Facebook or Google accounts or their email address. When signing up with an email address, no proof of age is required. If your child is under the age of 12, it is important to check whether your child has the game downloaded.

TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

Interacting with other players in the game is part of the fun as players can communicate with their friends and other players in the game. Players will benefit from wearing headphones to hear footsteps from other players trying to compromise their game. Wearing headphones makes it difficult for parents to hear what exactly is being said and children may be exposed to inappropriate language. Fortnite includes really good reporting features for players either cheating or misbehaving, and works towards having one of the best online gaming communities.

TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

There are many accounts on Facebook and Twitter which claim to give away free money (known as 'V bucks') for games which will be transferred to their Xbox Live or PSN cards. Any giveaway promotion from Fortnite will be in the game. It is important to check the authenticity of these accounts before giving away personal information in order to claim 'V bucks'. The websites or accounts may ask you to share your account name and password in order to claim the money; if these offers seem too good to be true, they usually are.

IT CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Games can last around 20 minutes but this varies according to the game. Children may feel angry if they lose the game and will want to continue playing until they achieve their desired result. The competitive nature of the game may make it difficult for them to stop playing halfway through as their position in the game could be affected.

IT CAN BE PLAYED ON THE GO

The game was released on mobile devices in April 2018, meaning it can be played without the need for a home games console. Some schools have reported that the game is distracting their students whilst in the classroom. As the game is available outside of the home, parents may not be aware of how long their child is playing this game.

'FREE' TO PLAY

The game is free to play. However, if playing on Xbox, you will need an Xbox gold subscription, which does require a fee.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

PEGI has given the game a rating of 12+. Even though the game includes violence and weapons such as crossbows, grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, shotguns and more, PEGI say "more graphic and realistic looking violence towards fantasy characters is allowed. Any violence towards human characters must look unrealistic unless it consists of only minor or trivial injury such as a slap," making the game 'suitable' for children aged 12 and over.

Top Tips for Parents

LIMIT GAME TIME

Parents can use parental controls on Xbox and PC to limit the time a child is playing games on these devices. Be aware that the game is available on iOS and will soon be available on all mobiles. With this in mind, it is worth having a conversation with your child to discuss and agree how long you would like them to play the games for. Even though the games last around 20 minutes, it may be difficult to take them away from a game mid play. It may be worth imposing a limit on the amount of matches they play rather than a time limit.

LOOK OUT FOR VBUCK SCAMS

It is important that your children are aware of the scams that they may come across online in association with the game. Open up conversation with them about scams and how they should never share their username or password with people in order to gain anything for the game.

SHOW THEM HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

If your child believes a player is playing or talking inappropriately, you should advise them to report them. To report a player, you can use the in-game feedback tool located in the Main Menu of the game. Additionally, you can report a player in-game when spectating them.

PREVENT YOUR CHILD FROM TALKING TO STRANGERS

There is an option to turn off the voice chat feature, which means your child wouldn't be able to talk to anybody, including their friends. However, they would still be able to use the in-app chat and hear other people's conversations. To turn off voice chat, open the Settings menu in the top right of the main Fortnite page, then click on the cog icon. Open the Audio tab at the top of the screen. From there, you can turn off voice chat.

RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

'Fortnite: Battle Royale' is a free to play game, but there are still options to make additional purchases. If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to restrict spending, we suggest using a payasafecard, or a games console gift card. These can be purchased in specific amounts, which will allow you to restrict the amount your child spends and removes the need for a credit/debit card to be used with their account.

USE A STRONG PASSWORD

It may seem like a simple tip, but it is important that your child selects a strong password when creating an account, particularly if a credit/debit card is associated with the account. This will help reduce the risk of their account being hacked.



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AGE RESTRICTION
13+



Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images, videos and chat with friends. Users can share images and videos directly to specific friends, or through a 'story' shared with their entire friend list, which documents the previous 24 hours. In a study, Snapchat was ranked the 4th most negative app in terms of having an impact on young people's health and wellbeing, with children feeling that they can use the app Snapchat to "make you look pretty."



What parents need to know about **SNAPCHAT**

EXPOSING YOUR CHILD'S EXACT LOCATION

The 'Snap Map' lets you share your EXACT location in real-time through a map on the app. The user's location updates when the app has been opened on the device. There is a warning on the Snapchat website about uploading images and videos to 'Our Story' stating that "snaps you submit to 'Our Story' can still show up on the Map, no matter which location setting you choose". When uploading to 'Our Story', your child's image or video could appear in "Search results and Stories on or off Snapchat - today or in the future."

LENS EXPLORER

The 'Lens Studio' on Snapchat gives users the freedom to use their imagination to design their own filters for themselves and others to use. Snapchat states that the lenses users create "must comply with our Lens Studio Submission Guidelines and Community Guidelines and must be appropriate for Snapchatters ages 13+." The 'Lens Explorer' in the app now enables users to choose from thousands of these creations to alter their snaps. Anyone can create a lens for Snapchat, which gives opportunities for age-inappropriate content to be uploaded.

SCREENSHOTS & SAVED MESSAGES

While Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and text disappear eventually, users still have the capability to screenshot or record anything which has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is possible and send a compromising image or message to somebody who they think they trust. They may also accidentally send an image or message to somebody who they do not trust. Simply by pressing and holding a message, the user is able to save a message they have received, which can be screenshotted or used against them at a later date.

SNAPSTREAKS & ADDICTION

'Snap Streaks' are gained when snaps have been sent back and forth consecutively between friends. The longer that snaps are sent between users, the longer the streak becomes. Furthermore, Snapchat rewards users who have achieved high Snap Streaks, by gifting emojis, adding incentives for users to keep the streaks. Children invest time into making their streaks as long as possible, which can put an incredible amount of pressure on both themselves and their friendships.

SEXTING

Due to 'Snaps' disappearing, users can even send a one-second photo or video). Snapchat has become the chosen platform for children and young people to send sexually explicit images or 'selfies'. Once a photo/video has been screenshotted, or recorded using another device or software, this can lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves. However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed, but taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

SNAP ORIGINALS

Through 'Snap Originals', users can watch content which has been created by Snapchat on the app, including comedy shows, drama, news and more. Additionally, there are new lenses and filters available, inspired by the 'snap originals' shows. This is another feature to encourage addiction.

Top Tips for Parents

THE RISKS OF SEXTING

It can be slightly awkward talking about this topic with your child, but if it helps them protect themselves, it is worth it. Talk to them about the consequences of sexting and make sure that they're aware of the risks. Ensure your child knows that 'Snaps' can be screenshotted. Teach them that if they post anything potentially embarrassing or harmful (either of themselves or someone else) it can have severe consequences as the message, image or video can be shared further.

REPORTING A STORY, LENS, FILTER, SNAP OR MESSAGE

If your child comes across inappropriate Snapchat content sent directly to them or in another person's story, advise them to report it immediately. This may include an inappropriate lens, filter, message or snap. To report an offensive lens, they should open the app and select the lens they want to report. An info button will appear above the lens. Click this, followed by the flag icon. This will send a report to Snapchat for further investigation. Reports can also be made on the Snapchat support website: support.snapchat.com.

USE 'GHOST MODE'

We highly recommend enabling 'Ghost Mode' on the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map'. To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, change the setting to 'Ghost Mode'.

HOW TO DELETE A MESSAGE

Advise your child never to send any negative messages (or images through gallery in the chat on the app) as screenshots can still be taken. You should also advise your child to screenshot any negative comments they receive as the sender can also delete them. To delete a message, simply press and hold the sent message and press delete.

TURN OFF 'QUICK ADD'

'Quick Add' helps friends find each other on the app. This is based on mutual friends or if their number is in their phone book. Explain to your child that this feature can open up their profile to strangers. We highly recommend that your child turns off the 'Quick Add' feature. This can be done in the settings.

RESTRICT STORY VIEWS

Your child can add videos and images to their 'Story' throughout the day which will last for 24 hours. By default, anyone in a user's friends list can see their story. We recommend checking the privacy settings to ensure that this has not been edited. This can simply be done in the app settings under the 'Who Can View My Story' section. The options to choose from are 'My Friends', 'Everyone' or 'Custom' - we suggest that it is set to 'My Friends'.



What parents need to know about **INSTAGRAM**

Instagram TV works similarly to YouTube. Users can watch videos from their favourite accounts on the platform, or create their own channel and post their own videos. It's important to note that anyone can create their own Instagram TV channel and you don't have to be friends with a person to follow an account and watch their videos. Ultimately, features are encouraging users to spend more time on the app, therefore it's important to set time limits and ensure their devices are not disturbing their sleep and performance at school.

Top Tips for Parents



'Apps' are designed to run on certain devices and are written for a specific operating system, such as Apple iOS, Windows, or Android. The official store for the Apple iOS operating system is known as the 'App Store' and it's where you can browse and download more than 2 million apps and games to use on the iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch and other Apple devices. When your children are using the app store, you need to be aware of the risks...



What parents need to know about The App Store

IS YOUR CHILD 13+?

To download and buy apps from the App Store, your child will need an Apple ID. If they have used other Apple services, such as iCloud, they can sign into the App Store with the same Apple ID. If they are aged 13 and under, they cannot sign up for an Apple ID on their own, but an adult can create an Apple ID for a child.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Apps are either free, paid for or free with in-app purchases. In-app purchases are optional transactions that can unlock extra functionality, virtual goods or unique content. Unless you change the settings, once your child has entered a password to make an in-app purchase, they can make additional purchases for 15 minutes without re-entering a password. This makes it extremely easy for children to accidentally run up huge bills.



LOOKALIKE APPS

Some developers release apps that copy the functionality, user interface and even product names and branding of popular apps, in an attempt to trick unsuspecting users to install them. By downloading an app from an unknown developer, your child could find their device compromised. Experts warn that through app permissions, hackers can potentially take photos using the camera and access media remotely, track your child's location, record any passwords they enter for other accounts, and send text messages from phones.

INAPPROPRIATE APPS

Some apps and games have content that is unsuitable for younger children - even the most popular or free-looking apps may feature adult-themed content, violence or cruelty to other people or animals, unmoderated chat, pornographic or sexual content.

THIRD-PARTY APP STORES

Because the official Apple App Store has a very stringent policy about what apps it approves, children may look elsewhere for apps and games they've heard about from friends. As well as the Apple App Store for iOS, there are hundreds of other third-party app stores, but the danger is they may not apply the same level of scrutiny toward the apps they allow to be listed. There's a higher chance of apps that infect devices with malicious codes or put user privacy at risk by extracting sensitive information.

Top Tips for Parents



CREATE YOUR CHILD'S ACCOUNT

You can create an Apple ID for a child under 13 and add them to your family group to keep an eye on their activity. Go to Settings > [your name] > Family Sharing > Add Family Member > Create a Child Account > Next. Enter your child's birthday and tap Next. Review the Parent Privacy Disclosure and tap Agree. With Family Sharing, you can add up to six family members to share App Store purchases, as well as iTunes and Apple Books.

SWITCH ON 'ASK TO BUY'

If you have a child that is over 13 years of age and has their own Apple account, make sure that you only allow them to make purchases with gift cards. You can also activate the 'Ask to Buy' feature if you are using Family Sharing, so that whenever a family member who isn't an adult initiates a new purchase, a request goes to the account organiser. You can also limit what content your child can access on the devices they use.

RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASES

You can restrict your child's ability to make in-app purchases. On an iOS device, open Settings, tap General and then Restrictions. Tap 'Enable Restrictions'. You can put a limitation that requires a password every time there is a purchase made in the App Store or iTunes Store.

BROWSE APPS BY AGE

To find apps and games that are right for your children, check the age ratings. On an iPhone or iPod Touch, this can be found in the information section on an app's product page, and on an iPad or desktop, the age range is near the Buy button. On the Kids page, you can find apps for age ranges, including 5 and under, 6 to 8, and 9 to 11.

AVOID OTHER APP STORES

Put a rule in place that your child can only use the official App Store to download apps and games. Explain why it is wise to only install applications from a trusted source to ensure their device is not affected by security issues or virus attacks.

HOW TO KNOW AN APP IS SAFE TO INSTALL

Advise your child that just because they've downloaded an app from an official store, it doesn't make it safe. Fake or copied apps will often include misspelt words and poor grammar, so always read the app description, and double check the developer name and title for warning signs. Be wary of apps that come with a long list of permission requests. Check the app's reviews and ratings - one star, one-line reviews complaining that an app didn't work on a certain device, or that there was a billing issue, is not a good indication.

SPOT FAKE REVIEWS

When checking the customer reviews within the app store, make sure they aren't vague and generic, or overly effusive, as some developers will try to manipulate their app's position by posting fake ratings and reviews. Check the number of downloads the app claims to have - the higher the number, the more likely it is to be safe. Your child can also check on a company's website to see if the app is available on there.



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What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS



If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.



RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:



WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

Source: www.bbfc.co.uk

RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:



PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:



LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: www.pegi.info



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YouTube

Top Tips for Parents

- Popular MMOs
- Captain's quarters
- Jack-o'-lanterns
- LaCarbis
- Dan TDM

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It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech-related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?



47%
of parents
said they thought their
children spent too much
time in front of screens

What parents need to know about **SCREEN ADDICTION**

SMARTPHONE ADDICTION IS A RECOGNISED HEALTH CONDITION

Children as young as 12 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction.

IT CAN CAUSE SLEEP DEPRIVATION

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 60% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ACCEPTANCE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes' explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face to face interactions.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.

APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.



Top Tips for Parents

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focused the next day at school. 30% of teenagers said that they wake up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedroom, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their outdoor activities to show your support.

STATISTICS

53% of children aged 3-4
go online for nearly 8hrs a week

79% of children aged 5-7
go online for nearly 9hrs a week

94% of children aged 8-11
go online for nearly 13.5hrs a week

99% of children aged 12-15
go online for nearly 21hrs a week

<https://www.independent.co.uk>
Children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes Report 2017. <https://www.ofcom.gov.uk>
<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-45444444>
Journal of Youth Studies. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10617019.2017.1301000>
University of Leeds. <https://health.leeds.ac.uk/news/children-1301000>



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WARNING!
Catfishers will
target **ANYONE**
OF **ANY** age

What parents need to know about **CATFISHING**

In this technological era, making friends online and communicating with them are normal parts of life. Unfortunately, there are people out there who may try and exploit your trust. Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to trick people into thinking they are somebody else. They assume a fake identity and goes the extra mile to make their victim believe that they are exactly who they say they are.

I new friend request



WHY DO PEOPLE CATFISH?

The term 'catfish' was coined in a 2010 documentary about a man who developed an online relationship with a woman, only to discover the person he thought he was communicating with was someone else. Catfishers make up life stories and use photographs of unsuspecting victims to create fake identities. They will share life experiences, jobs, friends and photographs to the fake accounts. The aim of the perpetrator may be to lure victims into a sexual relationship, but they can also be part of social engineering to trick people out of money. After building up trust and developing an online relationship, a catfisher may ask for cash for a loan, money for travel, or some other form of payment.

OTHER CONCERNS & WORRIES

Catfishing can escalate very quickly. As someone executing a catfishing scam is looking to achieve a goal - whatever that may be - they are likely to want to get things moving as quickly as possible. The victim may be encouraged to develop a relationship faster than they are comfortable with. In addition to this, people who create fake identities could also be taking the victim's photos and pretending to be them. It is common for fraudsters to post pictures stolen from social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram.



HOW TO SPOT CATFISHING

Profile pictures and other photos that are posted can be big indicators. To avoid revealing their real identity, a catfisher may use 'stock' images of models, other people's photos or photos in which it is difficult to see their face. They may try to limit chat to text-based messaging and anything involving video is likely to be shunned for fear of revealing their true identity. Through the course of conversations, there may be inconsistencies with what is said, or instances of people being very vague in response to specific questions about themselves.

Top Tips for Parents

MONITORING & CONVERSATION

Encourage your child to talk to their trusted adults about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online, particularly if someone they don't know has contacted them. Remind them that they should not accept friend requests or communicate with anyone they don't know online, and to ask a parent or carer if they are unsure. It is also very important to closely monitor their internet usage so you are aware of who they are communicating with, especially if they are being secretive. Have regular and honest conversations with your child about what is safe to share with people online; the importance of keeping private information private; and that anything that could identify them should not be shared online.

PRIVACY & SECURITY

Go through your child's security and privacy settings thoroughly to ensure that their online profiles are set to private. This means that only friends can see their profile and can contact them. It may also be a good idea to check through your child's friends list with them - do they know and trust everyone on the list? In some cases it's difficult to stop young people from talking to new people. In these circumstances, encourage your child to be curious and ask lots of questions rather than rely on the information given in someone's online profile. Do they have any mutual friends? If not, how did that person find them and why did they reach out? It's vital that they know never to arrange to meet up with people they meet online, and never to send money to them - either their own, or from your account.

BE ALERT & REPORT

Make sure that you and your child is aware of how to report and block accounts on all platforms that the child uses. You can report fake accounts and block users to prevent them from viewing your child's profile. If you are concerned that someone is using your child's photographs for their own benefits, you can check by using Google image search. You can upload a photograph and Google will show related images used on other websites. This will show you if anyone else is using photos that your child has previously shared online. If this is the case, you need to report the user directly to the platform. If you suspect that any fraudulent, illegal or inappropriate activity has taken place, you should report to the police immediately.

SOURCES:
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2010/sep/26/catfish-fake-identity
https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-15484848



**National
Online
Safety**

A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at help@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061





National
Online
Safety

7 questions to help you start a conversation with your child about online safety

#WakeUpWednesday

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Which apps/games are you using at the moment?

THIS WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF THINGS YOUR CHILDREN ARE DOING ON THEIR DEVICES, ALONG WITH THEIR INTERESTS. REMEMBER THAT THEY MIGHT NOT TELL YOU EVERYTHING THEY ARE USING, SO IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO ASK THEM TO SHOW YOU THEIR DEVICE. BECAUSE NEW APPS AND GAMES ARE RELEASED REGULARLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION OFTEN TO ENSURE YOU ARE UP TO DATE WITH WHAT THEY ARE DOING.



Which websites do you enjoy using and why?

AS IN THE TIP ABOVE, ASKING THIS QUESTION WILL ALLOW YOU TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING ONLINE, AND ENCOURAGE POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITY. ASK THEM HOW THEY USE THE WEBSITES, AND TAKE AN INTEREST IN HOW THEY CAN USE THEM IN A POSITIVE WAY, ALSO ASKING THEM TO SHOW YOU IF POSSIBLE.



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PLAY AGAIN?
YES NO

How does this game/app work?
Can I play?

SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING. WHILST YOU ARE PLAYING A GAME OR USING AN APP WITH THEM, IT MIGHT HIGHLIGHT SOMETHING THAT THEY DON'T NECESSARILY THINK IS A DANGER TO THEM. IF THEY ACT LIKE THEY DON'T WANT TO SHARE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH YOU, QUESTION WHY.

Do you have any online friends?

CHILDREN CAN FORM POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE ONLINE, AND THIS HAS BECOME MORE COMMON THANKS TO ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS. BUT THEY MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FRIEND AND A STRANGER. YOU COULD MAKE THE QUESTION MORE SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILD. FOR EXAMPLE: "HAVE YOU MET ANYONE ONLINE THAT YOU LIKE TO PLAY GAMES WITH?" THEY MAY NOT WANT TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOU, SO ENSURE YOU TEACH THEM ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.



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Do you know where to go for help?

ALTHOUGH YOU MAY BE THE ADULT THEY TRUST THE MOST, SOME CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ONLINE DUE TO CONFUSION OR EMBARRASSMENT. BECAUSE OF THIS THEY MAY STRUGGLE TO APPROACH THE NORMAL PEOPLE WHO WOULD HELP, SUCH AS YOURSELF OR A TEACHER. HAVE A CHAT TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE THEY CAN GO FOR HELP, AND HOW THEY CAN REPORT ANY ACTIVITY THAT THEY BELIEVE IS INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE.

Do you know what your personal information is?

YOUR CHILD MAY ALREADY KNOW WHAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS BUT THEY MIGHT NOT THINK ABOUT HOW IT CAN BE SHARED. HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION IS AND HOW THIS CAN AFFECT THEM IF IT IS SHARED BEYOND THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THE DANGERS OF SHARING CONTACT DETAILS OR PHOTOS, AS INFORMATION SUCH AS THIS CAN SPREAD QUICKLY ONLINE.



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Do you know your limits?

CHILDREN MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEVICE OR GAME ADDICTION. TALK TO THEM OPENLY ABOUT HEALTHY HABITS AND ASK WHETHER OR NOT THEM SPENDING TIME ONLINE OR PLAYING A GAME IS AFFECTING THEIR SLEEP, PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL OR IF THEY ARE GENERALLY LOSING INTEREST IN OTHER ACTIVITIES. YOU MAY LEAD ON TO ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSING THE INTRODUCTION OF TIME LIMITS WHEN AT HOME.

