A Guide to Online Safety

The following guide is provided as personal advice

Introduction

The governors and staff at Grenoside Primary School are committed to educating children in how to stay safe online and how to be responsible users of the internet and online technology. This is best achieved with close **partnership** between home and school.

The vast majority of parents and carers want to give their children the opportunity to learn, create and play online by providing them with an online computer, tablet, games console or mobile phone.

Whilst the internet has a degree of risk, there are things that all parents and carers can do to make exploring the online world **safer and healthier**.

Family routines

Communication, communication, communication. Try and have a relationship built on trust with your children and discuss online interactions.

How much time is too much? UK experts encourage limiting screen time to at most a couple of hours a day. When they are online, they could be watching one of your own movies, watching YouTube videos by trusted contributors, reading ebooks, sharing messages on Google Classroom or practising coding. When there's variety, there's benefits.

Ownership

Parents and carers should own the family's online devices and this should be clear. Therefore use of them by your children is a **privilege** that must be earned and can equally be lost. Ideally, parents and carers should maintain the expectation that **regular checks** will be had on browsing histories, saved content or text messages, and the passwords (phone, tablet and PC) remain under their supervision.

Social Media

(information taken from internetmatters.org)

Whilst being hugely popular, social media, like all forms of public communication, comes with some **risks**. By helping your children understand what the risks are, you can play a big part in preventing them from turning into actual problems.

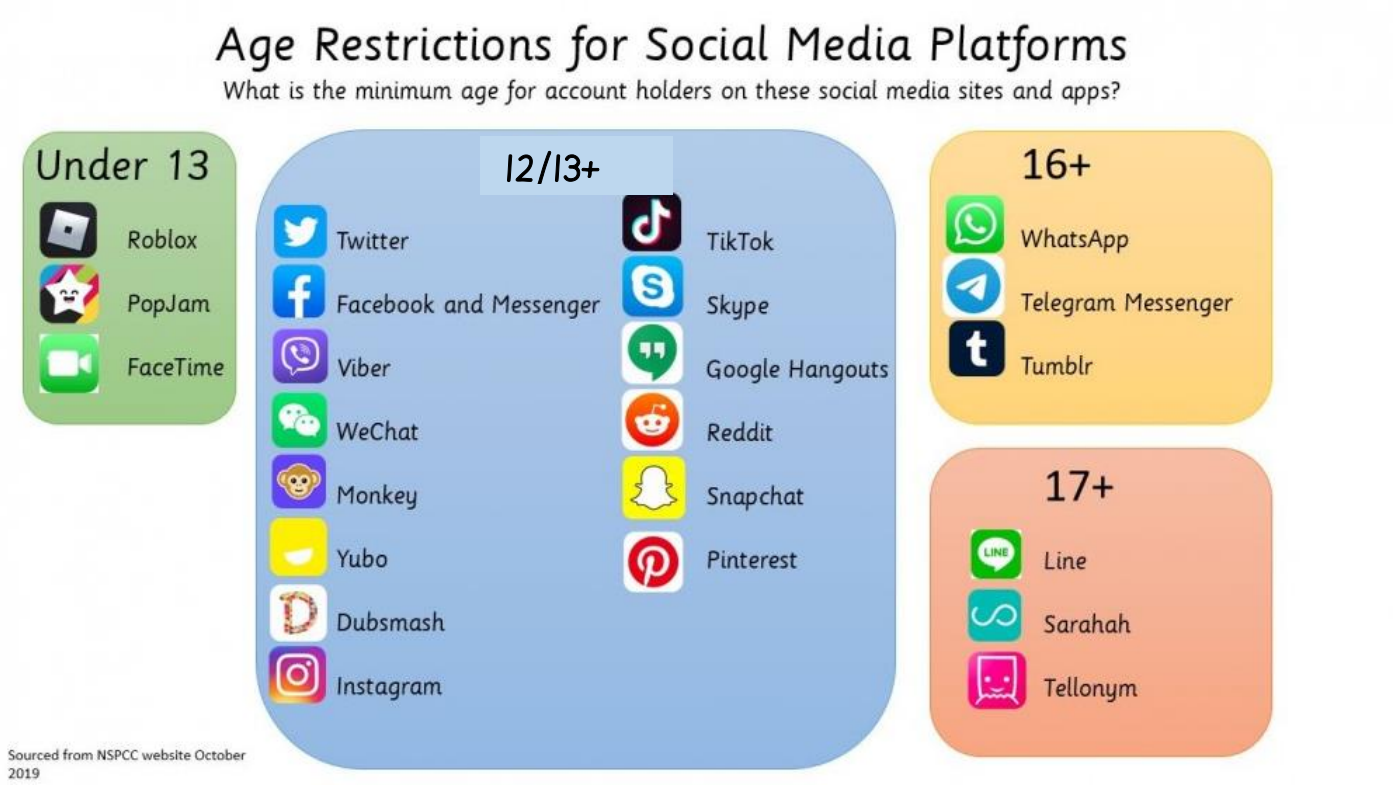
Potential risks include: seeing violent, sexual and pornographic content; viewing inaccurate or false information and extreme views; viewing the promotion of harmful behaviours including self-harm, anorexia and suicide; over-sharing of personal information; actively or unintentionally getting involved in bullying or hurtful behaviour and encountering people who might bully, intimidate or frighten them.

How this could then affect your children: fear of missing out leading to excessive use or exaggeration; getting upset by things they have seen and being uncertain about what to do; engaging, or being pressured into engaging in more risky behaviour either by accident or by design; developing unrealistic, and perhaps depressing ideals of body image and gender; becoming subject to peer pressure or interactions that are intense or too difficult to handle or creating an online reputation that may create problems for them in the future.

Practical tips to minimise the risks:

- **Check settings:** is 'geo-location' enabled? Do the 'tagging' settings protect your children's identity? Are the privacy settings set so that only approved friends can see posts and images?
- As stated previously, encourage your child **to come and talk to you** if anything upsets them.

It is worth noting that social media apps and websites do have age restrictions. Please see below.



PC and Consoles Games (Xbox, PlayStation etc.)

Whenever computer games are bought for your children, check the game's **PEGI or ERSB age rating**. These can range from 3 to 18 and are important to protect children from **adult**, **violent**, **sexual** and **criminal** content that is present in some video games now. You may be surprised to see that this closely reflects the requirements for an **18's film certificate**. The full details of what each rating may contain is available at the PEGI website.

OR...

PEGI			ESRB		
PEGI 3: suitable for all age groups / light violence in a comical context with non-real-life characters/ no frightening sounds or pictures / no bad language, sexual reference or nudity	3 www.pegi.info	Age: 3	Age: 3	EARLY CHILDHOOD EC CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**EC (Early Childhood):** suitable for ages 3 and older / no material that could be considered offensive by parents.
PEGI 7: suitable for ages 7 or older / may contain some frightening pictures or sounds / partial nudity is allowed, but not in a sexual context.	7 www.pegi.info	Age: 7	Age: 6	EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**E (Everyone) :** suitable for ages 6 and older / minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence / infrequent use of mild language.
PEGI 12: suitable for ages 12 or older / slightly more graphic violence towards non-real-life characters and non-graphic violence towards real-life characters (humans, animals...) / slightly more graphic nudity / mild bad language with no sexual expletives.	12 www.pegi.info	Age: 12	Age: 10	EVERYONE 10+ E10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**E10+ (Everyone 10+):** suitable for ages 10 and older / more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence / mild language / minimal suggestive themes.
			Age: 13	TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**T (Teen):** suitable for ages 13 and older / violence / suggestive themes / crude humour / minimal blood / simulated gambling / infrequent use of strong language
PEGI 16: suitable for ages 16 or older / the nudity and violence have reached a stage comparable to real-life / extreme bad language / drugs / tobacco / criminal activities	16 www.pegi.info	Age: 16	Age: 17	MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**M (Mature):** suitable for ages 17 and older / intense violence / blood and gore / sexual content / strong language
PEGI 18: suitable for ages 18 or older / contains "gross violence", meaning that the viewer feels a sense of revulsion (very subjective).	18 www.pegi.info	Age: 18	Age: 18	ADULTS ONLY 18+ AO CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	**AO (Adults Only):** suitable for ages 18 and older / prolonged scenes of intense violence / graphic sexual content and nudity.

Online Gaming

Be careful: websites with innocent, childish looking games on can also contain far more concerning, adult-themed ones. Look closely before letting your children click from game to game. Avoid games with **online message-boards**, or ways that players can **post video and image content** online in game environments, such as avatars or **chat rooms**. Unfortunately, there are people that entertain themselves '**trolling**' (internet slang for a person(s) who start quarrels or upsets people by posting mean and off-topic comments or images) such sites with inappropriate content.

Be aware that for both console and app-based games there is more often than not the ability to perform in-app **purchases** or **buy** downloadble game content. Check your children **don't have free access to your debit or credit card details.**

TOP TIPS

Visibility

Any computer use should happen in plain sight, not away in a bedroom or a quiet study. Although some computer games can stimulate learning, having an **Xbox, Playstation, smart phone or tablet in the bedroom can reduce rest and sleep quality**, which can in turn have a significant impact on learning at school.

Technical Steps

Filtering: set up an internet connection or 'family' filtering service. Check what your internet provider offers (e.g. Virgin Media Child Safe, EE Content Filter, O2 McAfee Security Center). However, don't let this give you a false sense of security: there are ways round every security product. In short, **there's no better alternative for the communication that sets the ground rules for access.**

Google Account

Create an account on Google for your children's computers, and keep the password. Sign into Google, select and lock in Google Safe Search. Sign into YouTube with the same Google account, then go to settings, activate Restricted Mode and lock this in, and these videos will also be filtered.

Administrator

If you want to be able to see what a computer is being used for, you may want to create a master '**Administrator'** user account, password protect it, and remove administrator privileges from the account you let children use. You can then see internet history settings, installed and downloaded files, and any system changes.

Photographs

Children can sometimes make bad decisions about the photos they take. **SelfieCop** is a free app which allows you to see photos taken by your children on their Smartphones. Go to www.selfiecop.com to find out more and download for free.

Stay up-to-date

Update your internet browsers regularly. This will give you the best available protection against popup adverts and other unwanted advertising. Informative websites such as **internetmatters.org** and apps like **NetAware** offer parents and carers guides as to which new apps and games are appropriate for their child.