



# KEEPING SAFE ONLINE

DATE: 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

Dear Parents and Carers


It has been great to welcome the children back to school. For some children they have continued to make progress whilst at home and for some other children we are working from new starting points.



What has come to our attention and concerns us the most at present is the number of children engaging in online activities, uploading videos of themselves to YouTube, TikTok and other apps. We have a cohort of children constantly wanting to talk about Fortnite, gaming and wanting to openly share their contact details with other children across the school.

Whilst we appreciate it has been very tricky during lockdown and consoles, tablets, phones etc. all with a range of apps will have been used to keep the children entertained there is a high level of risk.

In School we cover keeping safe online. The teachers and support staff are continually talking to the children about safe use, appropriate use, age restrictions etc. However, we can not be there in the home to outline this further. All of us have a duty to keep your child safe and whilst the internet is a fabulous intervention and technology is great and constantly evolving we need to ensure your child is accessing age appropriate material and not putting themselves in danger by sharing their user names, personal information, uploading personal videos of themselves etc.

I have put a brief overview below for your information. As I state, we can not enforce your family rules regarding the use of technology, games, online chatting etc. However, we need you to be aware of the risk and that we are discouraging the children sharing user names, profiles, YouTube channels etc. in school. It is not age appropriate and we do not endorse this.

App / Game	Age restriction	Risks
	13	<p>TikTok is a video-sharing app. Users can upload and share short videos of themselves lip-syncing to songs or acting out comedy sketches, and add special effects. They can gain followers ('fans') and browse other people's videos</p> <p><b>What should I look out for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• User profiles which talk about 'trading' or swapping pictures/videos</li><li>• Use of emojis that are commonly considered to be sexually suggestive (such as the aubergine)</li><li>• Hashtags, such as #tradefortrade, which clearly suggest the user is looking to trade illicit content</li><li>• The lyrical content of some songs – parents have raised concerns that it's not always age-appropriate Users cannot exchange images and videos via in-app messaging, but once they've made contact they move on to another platform to trade, such as Snapchat. TikTok has taken steps to remove users who it suspects are soliciting underage users. However,</li></ul>

		<p>there are still many suggestive profiles and TikTok has com <b>THERE RECENTLY WAS A VIDEO OF SUICIDE POSTED</b></p>
<p><b>Fortnite</b></p> 	<p><b>12 and above</b></p>	<p>Fortnite is an online video game where players compete to be the last person standing in a postapocalyptic world. The most popular version is Fortnite: Battle Royale, which sees up to 100 players pitted against each other to stay alive on an island. Players can build and demolish structures, and collect weapons, supplies and armour to help them along the way.</p> <p><b>What are the concerns?</b></p> <p>You may have seen news reports or heard concerns raised about the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication between players: a chat function allows players to talk to each other either over a headset and microphone, or using messaging. Children could use it to speak to strangers, or it could put them at risk of cyberbullying</li> <li>• In-app purchases: players can build up large bills on their parents' accounts by buying cosmetic items like outfits for your character and better-looking weapons (otherwise known as 'skins')</li> <li>• Addictive nature of the game: anecdotal stories tell of children staying up all night to play, or falling asleep in lessons after playing for too long. Some commentators attribute this to the communal feel of the game – you can play with your friends – and the game is different every time you play, keeping it fresh</li> </ul>
<p><b>Youtube</b></p> 	<p>13</p>	<p><b>How are young people using YouTube?</b></p> <p>Young people use YouTube to watch, <b>create and upload videos</b>. It is used to socialise, interact, learn, share and watch content. Popular types of videos include music, pranks, parodies, and 'how to videos. YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world and can be used as the starting point for research or learning about a particular topic.</p> <p><b>What are some of the potential issues with YouTube?</b></p> <p>YouTube consists of user-generated content. Videos found on the site don't always have age appropriate classifications. The site relies on users to monitor and report inappropriate content. Users do not need to create an account to use the site so it is difficult to manage or regulate underage users. YouTube users may be exposed to bullying and harassment on the site however there are steps people can take to minimise this risk.</p>
<p>In the process of uploading lots of information on to our school website for your information. We will keep you informed of information shared in school and we will discuss with you any content and use that concerns us.</p> <p>Again, We appreciate your support on this and if you do require further guidance please do not hesitate to make contact with Micaela Armstrong – Family Support.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kindest Regards,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mrs Dodd</p>		

