



**Internet Safety**

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Top tips

* Have clear guidelines for where devices are stored and played on.
* Create a family agreement for online usage and safety. See the attached document, ‘Internet Safety Plan’ as a model for you to use.
* Make sure that grandparents and other carers are aware of your internet rules.
* Have a culture of honesty and openness. Make sure that your child knows that they should come and speak with you about anything that may encounter online.
* Investigate any game or app that your child requests before they start playing on it. A simple search on google will alert you to the parental controls and conversations that need to be had before your child uses the game or app.
* Be aware that most games and apps are ever evolving, and they have many layers. Be sure that you are aware of which apps allow your child to communicate with a stranger online.

**Did you know…**



Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram requires everyone to be at least **13 years old** before they can create an account. Creating an account with false information is a violation of the terms. The age restrictions are in place for a good reason.

**What is Roblox?**

****Roblox is an online ‘game creator’ system where the majority of the content is created by ‘amateur’ game creators. These game creators are able to make and publish games to the community using simple tools. Because the content in Roblox is user-generated (by the people who are playing it), it doesn’t fall under the same rigorous age ratings as content made by commercial companies. Roblox explicitly states that there is no blood/violence in their rating details, however this only covers their basic system, not the systems created by other users. Roblox itself does filter and check the games that are being created both for inappropriate images and profanity. However, games are still allowed that can have horror, murder or bloody themes. One game, Hotline Roblox, tasked players with knocking each other over with guns or knives before beating each other’s head until they died with blood splatters.

Although the actual game of Roblox is free to play, children are incentivised to make purchases in the game with **real money**. Children can purchase Roblox for cash which are then spent on equipment and outfits in the games. Parents should ensure their account details are not linked to the game. Being an online game means that players in Roblox can interact and communicate with each other in various ways. This can be via **voice or written text** once friend requests have been made. Roblox has a parental control section so that you can restrict and control your child’s use of Roblox. Sites such as <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/parents-guide-to-roblox-and-how-your-kids-can-play-it-safely/> show you how to set up safe systems for your child on Roblox.

**What is Minecraft?**

Minecraft is often described as a ‘sandbox game’. This means that it’s a virtual land where users can create their own worlds and experiences, using building blocks, resources discovered on the site and their own creativity. Minecraft has spawned video games which have their own ratings. The online version of Minecraft’s terms and conditions specify that under 13’s need parental permission to play. On multiplayer, the chat function allows users to participate in discussions. You can open a chat window by pressing the 'T' button and then pressing 'Enter' to display the chat to other users. In the chat function, users can also post website links. Chat features on sites allow children to make friends with people who, in this case, have similar gaming interests. However, online, there is no way of verifying who these people might be. So if your child is talking to people online that they have never met in the real world, it is important that they don’t give away any personal information about themselves, or move their conversations into other online areas, especially private ones where conversations could become more personal.

***Research and set parental controls on all devices, apps and games before your child uses them.***

More advice

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/) – this site contains fun games and activities to use as discussion points with your child in issues around e-safety.

[www.commonsensemedia.co.uk](http://www.commonsensemedia.co.uk/) – get a quick summary of new apps, movies, games etc. These give info on how appropriate the content is.

[www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers](http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers) - access a range of resources including an interactive guide called “Know IT all for parents”. Contains key advice, info and support for keeping kids safe.

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/parents](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parents) - a step by step guide on how to keep your child safe and your home internet world safe

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk/) – this website includes a unique facility that enables parents and young people to make reports of actual or attempted abuse online. The click CEOP button is on many websites (including school) as an emergency button to report such incidents.