

# ONLINE SAFETY



Many children ask for the latest technology, devices, and games for Christmas, and there may be considerations for parents and carers to make before buying. There is so much that we can do online nowadays but it is important that we set boundaries for our children to keep them safe.

## Do your research

Understanding why your child wants a specific device, console, or game is a great starting point. Is it because all of their friends play on one platform? Is it because an influencer they follow has recommended it? Once you know why, you can make an informed decision and do further research.

Find out what other parents and carers are saying about the device or game that your child has asked for. Once you decide on the device, [Common Sense Media](#) has reviews of games, apps, and services from other parents and carers, and can help you decide if something is appropriate for your child.

## Set up expectations ahead of time

A Family Agreement is a fantastic tool to help you establish boundaries and set expectations around your family's device usage.

A Family Agreement can be updated as new devices are brought into the house, or when the way your family uses technology changes.

Updating an existing Family Agreement when your child receives their new device allows them to know where they can use it, how long for, and whether they need permission to download apps or make purchases.

[Download and print the Childnet Family Agreement here.](#)



## Set up devices ahead of your child opening it

Getting a device can be an exciting time, and it can often be a lot easier to set up parental controls, screen time limits, and other settings before you hand the device to your child.

If you are gifting a second-hand device to your child, you can make sure that the device has been reset to factory settings before you give it to your child. This means that any apps, settings, or data that is already on the device have been removed, and you can start with a blank slate. By setting up the technology before you gift it, you can put in place some safety settings and parental controls to help you feel comfortable with your child using it.

## Have conversations with the whole family

It is important that your child knows that if they encounter something online that they haven't seen before, or something that worries or upsets them, they can turn to you for help. Whilst we always recommend that parental controls are enabled, they can never be 100% guaranteed to block inappropriate content.

Therefore, it's important to give practical safety tips to your child in the case of coming across unwanted content, whether that's teaching them how to use report and block tools, or to turn the device off and speak to an adult they trust. Often, children and young people can find opening up to an adult about things they've seen online daunting, so having regular check-ins with your child provides them with plenty of opportunities to talk things over. Remember to be curious and not furious - if they know it isn't their fault and you help them to overcome their issue, they're likely to come back to you to speak about any future issues.

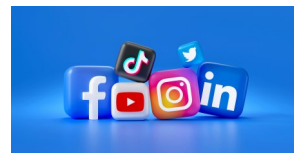
## Check age restrictions/ratings

Video games: PEGI provides age ratings for video games. These ratings do not take into consideration user generated content within games and chat facilities within games. Fortnite has an age classification of 12 and over (the Lego version is 7+). Minecraft is 7+.



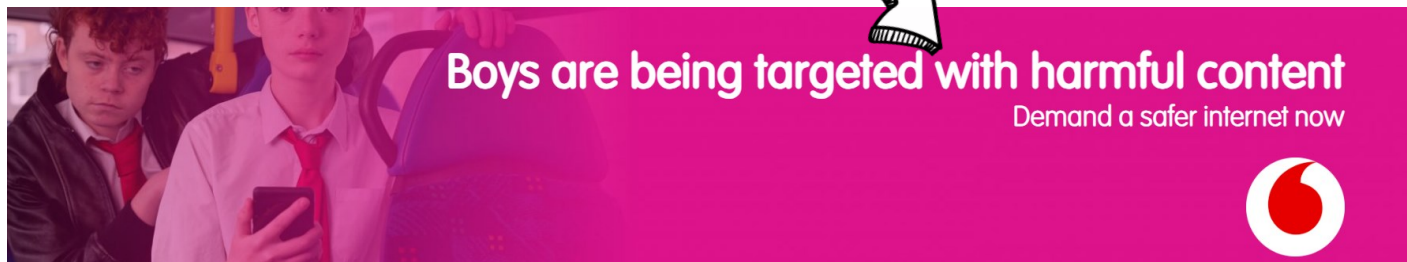
**Apps:** Check the individual age ratings within the relevant app store. We also recommend that you download any apps and play them yourself to check their suitability.

**Social Media:** All social media networks including SnapChat, Facebook, X, TikTok and Instagram have a minimum age rating; they are all at least 13+. No primary aged children should have accounts.



# OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Boys are being targeted with harmful content. Global Action Plan along with Vodafone have produced this powerful video, highlighting how social media algorithms can amplify misogynistic content for boys. Watch it here:



Do you need suggestions on age appropriate games?

You could use either of the following websites to search suitable games. Remember, PEGI rates the gameplay so whilst it is important to review age ratings, you must also check if it has a communication feature as this might mean you decide a game is not suitable for your child.

Have you given your child access to social media but are now regretting that decision? Bark have published this article to help you take back control and remove access to social media:



**ASK ABOUT GAMES**



Check out our school website for other helpful 'How to' guides, links to blogs about online safety and recommended resources for children:



## CONTACT US:



Please speak to your child's class teacher, Mr Leaver (Online safety lead) or email the office if you would like further support.

[admin@lambslane.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@lambslane.wokingham.sch.uk)

