



Safeguarding Update

March/April 2020

Issue 24

With these unprecedented times and the need for online facilities to help with learning, remaining in social contact and to give some 'down time' we would like to offer the following advice from www.net-aware.org.uk (part of the NSPCC group)

Net Aware

 **Houseparty** is a free video chat app where you can talk to people one-on-one or in groups of up to eight, with people you know and people you might not. You can also play games with the people you're chatting to. **Official Rating 13+**

Due to its content and use, the expert's view of this platform is that children are at a high risk of being exposed to sexually inappropriate content as well as bullying.

 **imo** is a free video, voice and chat app that lets you talk to your contacts one-on-one or in groups. The app also connects you to people you don't know through turning on your location and connecting with people close by. **Because of this feature, we don't think it's appropriate for under 18s.**

 **Skype** is a platform and app that lets you make audio and video calls to other people around the world. You can also send instant messages. **Official Rating 13+**

 **TikTok** (formerly called Musical.ly) is a social media platform that lets you create, share and discover 60 second videos. You can use music and effects to enhance your videos and you can also browse other people's videos and interact with them. **Official Rating 13+**

Due to its content and use, the expert's view of this platform is that children are at a high risk of being exposed to inappropriate content (such as promotion of drugs, alcohol and crime) as well as bullying



FaceTime lets you make video and audio calls from your iPhone, iPad and iPod touch. You can also capture photos during calls using the Live Photos feature, which is like a screenshot.

Official Rating 4+



Snapchat lets you send photos, short videos or messages to your friends. Pictures and videos, known as Snaps, usually appear temporarily before disappearing, though they can be captured via screenshots. The Stories feature lets you share Snaps in a sequence for up to 24 hours. Using the Discover screen lets you watch Stories from friends, celebrities and brands.

Official Rating 13+

Due to its content and use, the expert's view of this platform is that children are at a high risk of being exposed to bullying.



WeChat is one of the world's most popular social networks. It has multiple features, including text, audio and video chat, games and location sharing. WeChat also has a feature called time capsule, which, similar to Instagram stories, lets you share short videos for 24 hours.

Official Rating 13+

Due to its content and use, the expert's view of this platform is that children are at a high risk of being exposed to sexually inappropriate content as well as bullying.



WhatsApp is an instant messaging app which lets you send messages, images and videos in one-to-one and group chats with your contacts. You can choose to share your live location for up to eight hours with one contact or a group.

Official Rating 16+

At present you cannot report incidents of bullying directly to WhatsApp



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Useful internet safety sites:

www.net-aware.org.uk

www.internetmatters.org

What age can my child start social networking?

As a parent it's important you know that all social networking platforms (apps) have age limits. Some social networks use technologies that mightn't be right for some ages, or engage with communities that are made up of people much older than your child.

What are the risks of an underage social networking account?

- Many sites include an instant message function which allows private conversations
- Most social networking sites have an app version, meaning your child will have access to the social network from their smartphone/tablet. **Some app versions of social networks use the location of the phone.**
- Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may spread
- It isn't easy to take back information that has been posted – and can be impossible if it's already been shared.
- Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are. Chatrooms and forums can connect people who are complete strangers and can be unmoderated
- Chatrooms and forums are one of the places online groomers go to connect with children. They can also be places where people use a lot of sexual language and engage in online flirting. This is sometimes done through video chat programs.

YouTube and our children: a new kind of celebrity



There's no doubt that YouTube provides an amazing opportunity for children to learn. How many times have we, as adults, found ourselves watching a tutorial on how to do something? It's an invaluable source which can play a huge role of the lives of our children, with many fan-following YouTubers, aspiring to become them and even posting video content themselves.

How can I tell which 'YouTubers' are safe for my child to follow and which are not?

The BBC have created an online resource called 'Own It' aimed at helping children and young people to manage their online lives safely and have recruited a team of 'celebrity vloggers' to give their message. These stars (including Eman Kellman, Grace Mandaville and Scola) use this channel to give really positive messages and is worth a view with older children too.



So, are YouTube channels a negative thing?

Lots of inappropriate content can be found on YouTube - children can easily be drawn into content which is not age-appropriate; however, there are lots of positive YouTube channels that can help children to learn new skills, develop understanding and empathy and engage in world issues.

As YouTube do say children should be 13 or over, if you do choose to allow your child to use it under your supervision, we advise following these steps:

- Turn on Restricted mode – this restricts availability of mature content
- Watch alongside from time to time to get a feel for the channels
- Ensure your child knows how to report content and understands they can talk to you if they see anything upsetting online

YouTube Kids is also available with the option to select the shows you prefer your child to watch, however inappropriate content has also been found on here too so please use caution. Services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and BBC iPlayerKids are a great alternative containing lots of children's programmes.

My child wants to share on social media. Should I be worried?

YouTube (along with other social media platforms) should NOT be used by those under the age of 14 due the associated risks of comments on the videos they post and feedback from viewers which may not always be positive or appropriate.

As with all social media platforms, remind children that what they post online might stay around for a long time and be hard to remove and to bear in mind that embarrassing or controversial content might cause unnecessary stress or impact on education or job opportunities later in life.