Online Safety Newsletter November 2023

Staying safe on a PlayStation

Internet Matters have teamed up with Sony Interactive Entertainment to create a quiz that you can play with your child to see who knows more about the safety options available on a PlayStation. Play the quiz here:

https://www.internetmatters.org/press-start-for-playstation-safety/

Ollee - your virtual friend

Parent Zone have created 'Ollee,' a virtual friend that asks your child how they are feeling and provides ideas and advice to help. Ollee is aimed at 8-11 year olds. You are also able to use the app to find advice around any issues that you think your child might be having.

You can find out more here:

https://parentzone.org.uk/Ollee

Roblox

Roblox is a platform consisting of a collection of games. Players can either create games or play games that other users have created. It is free to download (however subscription options and in game/app purchases are available) and can be played across numerous devices. **A lot of the content is user generated, which may mean not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play. It is important to set up appropriate parental controls for your child.**

What rating is Roblox?

PEGI rate Roblox with a Parental Guidance label, this is because it is difficult to rate due to the huge level of user generated content. It is rated for **'Teens'** on Google Play and **12+** on the App store.

What should I be aware of?

Chat Facility - Players can chat to each other on Roblox. You can turn communication off completely or add restrictions, such as only communicate with friends.

Virtual Currency - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories. For children under 13, you can set the Monthly Spend Restriction in settings.

Game content – as mentioned, users create games so sometimes the content/themes may not be appropriate for your child.

How do I report abuse and block users?

Roblox have a Report Abuse system so show your child how to use it to report inappropriate content as well as how to block other users. There are different ways of doing this depending on the device being used.

How do I set up parental controls and a pin?

Parental controls are available within settings. We recommend that you explore the parental controls available and set as appropriate. You can enable a PIN, which means that changes cannot be made without this pin. You can set up Allowed Experiences, which allows you to select age-appropriate experiences, so your child can only join experiences that match their age. Age categories available are for all, 9+, 13+ and 17+. All experiences are still searchable though.

To view content that is suitable for 17+, then a user must participate in a verification process by submitting valid ID.

Further information:

- https://corp.roblox.com/parents/
- https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/roblox/

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.
Current as of the date released 1.11.23.

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok.

TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. Some of the videos on TikTok may not be appropriate for your child to view and there is also the risk of strangers contacting your child. If your child is using TikTok then make sure the appropriate security/privacy settings are on.

Account set up

By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private at the start and we would recommend keeping it as this. This means your child must approve follower requests. You can read more about the other settings available (such as switching off comments and switching on restricted mode) here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings

As always, it is important that when setting up an account on TikTok, your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age. For example, Direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15 and they do not receive push notifications from 9pm. In addition, advertisements are tailored to the user's age.

Family Pairing

This allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode (limit the appearance of content that may not be appropriate) and screen time management. You can find out more here: https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/

Inappropriate content, themes and challenges on TikTok

Whilst against TikTok's guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be dangerous. If your child is using TikTok, chat to them regularly about what they are viewing.

Blocking and Reporting

Ensure your child knows how to use the safety features available to them, including how to report comments, direct messages and another user. You can find out more here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/report-a-problem

Further information

- https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok

WhatsApp's editing feature

You must be at least 16 years old to use WhatsApp.

You may have noticed that WhatsApp have added an editing feature so you can change messages that you have sent for up to 15 minutes afterwards. Childnet have published a blog outlining what you should be aware about with this new feature:

https://www.childnet.com/blog/find-out-whatsapps-new-features-and-how-it-can-impact-online-safety/

EA Sports FC 24

EA Sports FC 24 has been rated as PEGI 3, which means it is suitable for those over the age of 3. However, you need to be aware that the game does include in-app purchases and users can interact with each other.

EA Sports FC 24 was released in September and is a rebranding for the EA FIFA series. It is available to play across a series of platforms.

As players can communicate with others, your child may be exposed to inappropriate language and there is also the risk of grooming when online interaction takes place. Ensure your child knows how to use the applicable reporting tools. The chat facility can be switched off.