

# Online Safety Newsletter

March 2025

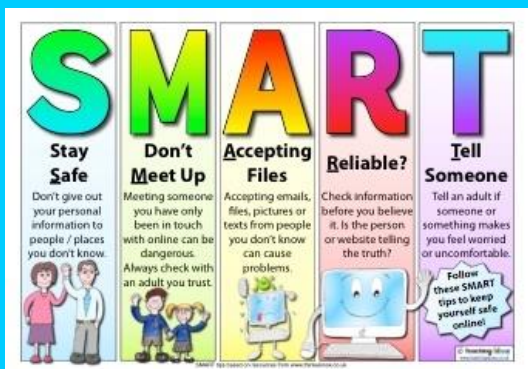
Issue 3.



**Welcome back!** We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. This year we will continue to send out a half termly newsletter with a variety of information aimed at supporting our families at home with all things online safety related.



Jessie & Friends is a series (aimed at 4 – 7 year olds) of three animations that follow the adventures of Jessie, Tia and Mo as they begin to navigate the online world, watching videos, sharing pictures and playing games. There's also a storybook for each episode, to help you and your child keep the conversation going.



## Get in touch!

Do you have a question or topic about online safety you'd like help with? Email the school office with 'Online Safety' in the subject and we'll do our best to include it in the next edition.

With the continued cold weather, time spent indoors on devices is likely to increase. The internet can be a fantastic place for children, providing them with exciting opportunities. Talking about the positives of going online, keeping the conversations broad and valuing your child's opinion shows that you are interested in all aspects of their online world.

Perhaps this is the first time your child has been given a device? Encouraging your child to discuss what they enjoy about going online can be a helpful bridge to talking about safety messages and more difficult issues in the future.

Click the following links for instructions on how to setup parental controls on your children's devices.

[How to setup parental controls – iPhone](#)

[How to setup parental controls - Android](#)



**10 key messages to share with your child (source: [UK Safer Internet Centre](#))**

1. "You can always come to me if you need help." This is the most important thing to let your child know, and a way to give them confidence to speak to you when they need support.
2. "What would you do if this happened...?" Give your child strategies to deal with upsetting experiences online
3. "Remember that not everyone is who they say they are online." Remind your child to always tell an adult if anyone they only know online makes them feel uncomfortable, or asks to meet up or share personal information or images.
4. "Keep your personal information safe, and other people's too." This includes full names, contact details, and real-time locations.
5. "Be respectful to others online." Remind them if it's not okay offline...
6. "Think before you post." Help your child to be aware that their online actions can have consequences for themselves and others.
7. "Remember to ask if it's okay." Asking for, and receiving permission from others online is important before sharing images, adding people into group chats, etc
8. "Remember not everything is true online." Help your child to be a critical thinker to find accurate information.
9. "The things other people post online might not always show what their life is really like." Reassure your child that nobody's life is as perfect as it may seem online, and judging yourself against other's online lives isn't a fair comparison
10. "Recognise how going online makes you feel and take a break when you need to." Your child may need support in doing this, such as timers and reminders.



# Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

## PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

## ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

## AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

## DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

18  
CENSORED

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

## Meet Our Expert

Daniel Upcombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 15 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.



## FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

## ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

## TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

## BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

**NOS** National Online Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://hipalapp/about/privacy.html>