

Safer Internet Use

Tips for encouraging open discussion about digital life

Make your interest clear

Ask to see your child's favourite games and apps which will help you spot issues

Be open, honest, and appropriate to their age

When answering questions about puberty, relationships, etc.

Remind your child they can always talk to you

Even when they view harmful content, talking about it openly will help

Discuss that not everything we see online is real

Use examples from your own online world, like posts that show perfect houses

Try to remain calm

Your initial reaction could stop a child from speaking openly about what they've seen

Create a family agreement

About device use including when to use devices, parental controls and why it's good to talk

Keep talking

Online Safety Newsletter

October 2025

Fuse HMD with HarmBlock+

The Safeguarding Lead from Sir Christopher Hatton Academy was in London for a safeguarding conference recently where a new smartphone, the Fuse HMD with Harmblock+, was advertised by an online safety expert. This is neither an advert nor an endorsement from us – more a 'have a look and see what you think' of this new approach to keeping children safe in the world of smartphones:



What are the features?

Parental Controls

Built into the phone rather than an add-on, the idea is that the device grows with your child. It works on the principle of everything being blocked unless enabled rather than everything being enabled unless blocked. You no longer need to predict the harms or stay ahead of the tech to keep your child safe.

Nude Images

We would all like to think that this won't affect our child, or that they are too young or too sensible. Shockingly, primary-aged children are one of the fastest growing sources of self-generated nude imagery. This phone has built in AI that stops nudity from being shown, shot, and stored.

Other features

- Can only call and text with parent-approved contacts
- Parental controls cannot be bypassed
- Parents can designate up to 10 safe zones — like home and school — and get immediate notifications when their child enters or leaves those zones.
- Track their live location and view 3 days of location history to see where they've been.

Staying safe online
Advice to share with your child

Tell a trusted adult if something upsets you

Take breaks from being online

Don't chat with strangers

Ask permission before downloading anything

Avoid sharing private photos

Don't give away personal information

Double check your news sources

Take notice of age restrictions

Stick to trusted apps

Be suspicious of new information

Show respect to others

Be honest with parents and carers

Discord

One of the highest risks to your child online is interacting with strangers when playing online games such as via Xbox Live. Many students also seek to connect with more people on the increasingly popular app Discord which is used heavily by the gaming community, including for single-player games. Ask your child if they are aware of or using this app:



What are the dangers?

Mature content

The app age recommendation is 13+ yet Apple's app store classifies it as 17+ due to "Frequent/Intense Mature/Suggestive Themes" and "Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity."

Users join 'servers' to talk to others – many of which are labelled as 18+ due to containing graphic or adult material; however not all are properly labelled so your child could easily stumble across one.

Financial risks

Discord Nitro is a paid-for addition that allows users to donate money to other users.

Connecting with strangers

The point of the app is to connect like-minded strangers. The app then encourages messaging and voice chat with these strangers. Users can also turn on live video. This level of interaction with strangers, many of whom may be older than your child, can place them at risk of grooming and/or radicalization.

How can you make it safer for your child?

- Ensure that it is used in a family space where you can overhear and keep an eye on content and interactions
- Ensure that your child is aware of the risks and reports concerning content or messages to you so that you can support them
- Ensure that the 'Keep Me Safe' option is ticked in the 'Privacy & Safety' menu to turn on in-app safety features

Starting a conversation about life online

Be positive and open-minded about the internet

Talk early and often

Make conversations about the internet part of your daily routine

Create a safe space for conversations

Talking face to face can sometimes be difficult, so talking while walking alongside or while in a car might be easier. Make sure there are no distractions

Keep it relevant

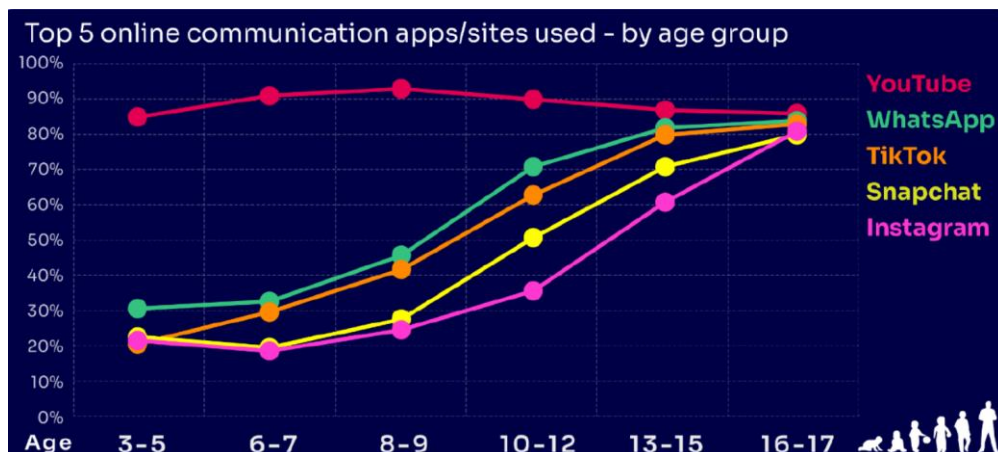
The way your child uses the internet will change as they grow older. So, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have to get a feel of the challenges and experiences they face online

Be proactive

Create an agreement together on how the internet will be used, including time spend online, who your child can communicate with, appropriate apps and games and safety tools to report and block harmful content

What should I upskill myself on?

As a parent/carer it can be a challenge to keep up to date with all of the different apps and dangers out there. The national data tells us that in reality most children are mainly using the same five social media apps regularly. If you are going to start somewhere, read up on these to understand the risks your child is most likely coming across online. The 'big five' are YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram – the graphic below shows the percentage of each age group who use these tools:



Parent guides to these apps and many more can be found here: [Social media apps and platforms safety guide | Internet Matters](#)

Do you have an agreed family emoji?

- Sometimes your child may be in a situation where they need you to come and get them in an emergency or need an excuse to leave an unsafe situation
- Agreeing a set emoji as a family, one that you wouldn't routinely use, is a great way of your child being able to send you a secret signal
- They can either send you the emoji on its own or as part of a message as a coded way of saying either (a) come and get me or (b) ring me and give me an excuse to leave in front of my friends so that I can blame you and get myself away from danger
- Hopefully you will never need to use it but it is always worth planning ahead just in case!

