

Safer Internet Day

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 and honest, 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

February 2023

HiPal

HiPal is a trending social media app which turns phones into walkie-talkies, allowing people to have voice conversations with friends or strangers. 2 account options are available, under 12 (which limits contact with strangers) and over 12 (which allows adding strangers, sharing videos and pictures publicly and enabling voice chat with strangers).



What are the risks?

Sexting and suggestive pics

As soon as you join, you can get private messages from strangers either asking for explicit pictures or sharing their own with you. Even in browse mode, some of the pictures showing up can be explicit.

No age verification

Users are initially given a choice of over or under 12 profile but this is not verified. There is no moderation on content available. There is also a report button that doesn't seem to be followed up on.

Need for validation

Some users post photos to get positive reactions. Suggestive images tend to get more positive feedback encouraging them to post more. Receiving unkind comments can also impact a young person's confidence and self-worth.

Intrusive features

The app offers Boom messages to be sent which are highly distracting and can take over the entire phone screen briefly, not allowing access to the phone until the message fades.

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

World of WarCraft

World of WarCraft just launched their newest iteration, Dragonflight, which has attracted a lot of young users to jump into this type of role-playing games for the first time.



Potential for addiction

The game can trigger a powerful 'just one more time' mentality in players, especially younger ones. It pushes the players to always be rushing to earn the next weapon or item or level up their character.

Simulated violence

The game has some violent battle scenes, although they are more of a cartoonish quality so are not overly gory or scary.

In-game purchases

The game is available for a monthly subscription of £9.99. There are also many items which can be purchased from the in-game store that players can buy to enhance the look of their characters.

Voice and text chat

The game provides the players with the option to use voice or text chat while playing. This could put the players at increased risk of being trolled or receiving spam through the game's messaging system.

Advice for parents and carers

The age rating for the game is 12+ due to the mild violence and occasional use of offensive language, so you may need to explain this to your younger children if they wish to play.

Warcraft can be addictive but playing it together can also be a great way of spending time with your child. Consider using the game as a reward for completing their tasks.

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

Staying safe on TikTok

TikTok is a free social media app that allows users to create and share short videos. It has more than 1 billion active users and is most popular with the under-16 age range.

There are several obvious risks with using TikTok such as contact with strangers, addictive nature of the app, age-inappropriate content and dangerous challenges that children watch and then try to participate in. That is why we thought of sharing some ways to minimise these risks with young people:

1. Make accounts private to stop strangers being able to view your child's video (this is set by default for under-16s but is also quite easy to get around).
2. Enable family pairing which allows you to link your account with your child's and control their settings remotely. Children are not able to change these settings without parental approval.
3. Discuss the dangers with your child. For example, ensure they do not share any identifying personal information in their videos.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day was celebrated on February 7th. The aim of the day is to call on people from around the world to work together to make the Internet a safer and more positive place for everyone, but especially for young people. The annual campaign run by the UK Safer Internet Centre influences governments, police forces, charities and tech companies to focus on making online users safe.

The theme of Safer Internet Day this year is **“Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online”**.

This is to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard and that they are encouraged to shape the online safety support they receive. That is why we are asking parents and carers to take time to listen to children and young people to make positive change together.

Find out more about the day and access resources that will help you with these conversations here:

[Safer Internet Day 2023 - UK Safer Internet Centre](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/saferinternetday2023)