



# Online Safety

Welcome to the **May** edition of our Online Safety Newsletter.

As part of our Tech Thursday worships, our focus has been on how to navigate and manage the wealth of information that is available to us online. We have looked at the difference between **facts, opinions and beliefs** and this feeds into **fake news**. We have looked at how we can't always believe everything that we read and how to check the reliability of the information. We have also explored what **persuasive design** is and some of the techniques that companies use to keep us engaged with content online for longer such as **limitless scrolling**, the use of **notifications and alerts** and **past event memories**. We have also explored some of the techniques companies use to encourage us to spend more money online such as **loot boxes, pop ups and adverts**, and the use of **product placement by social media influencers**.

In this edition, there is some helpful advice and guidance about parental controls, safety advice, well-being tips, games and apps. Don't forget that there is also a wealth of information guides about online safety on our web site: [Frimley Church of England School - Online Safety](#) so please check it out!

If there is any content in this newsletter that you'd like to discuss further or require any more support with, please contact either myself Ailsa Reehal, Computing Lead, or Rachel Jones, Designated Online Safety Safeguarding Lead or complete the attached form [Frimley's Half Termly Online Safety Newsletter](#)

## Misinformation online

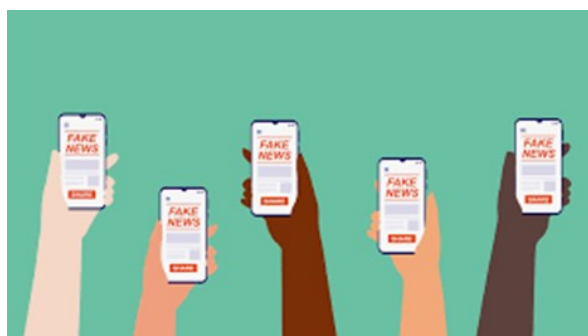
There is a lot of information online that is incorrect, fake or misleading and it can sometimes be difficult for adults, let alone younger people, to distinguish between what is true and what is fake.

We have been working on developing the digital literacy skills in our children by encouraging them to think critically about what they read online and to fact check. Both the BBC and Channel 4 have fact checking areas on their websites:

- [BBC Verify | Latest News & Updates | BBC News](#)
- [www.channel4.com](http://www.channel4.com)

One way to start the conversation would be to play a game such as 'Can you spot the signs of fake news?' from the BBC which we played in class as part of our Tech Thursday assembly and even some of our staff found it challenging: [Quiz: Can you spot the signs of fake news? - BBC Bitesize](#)

Further information can be found at [Misinformation - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)



### What is a fact, opinion & belief?



#### Fact

Something that is known to be and proof of it exists.

#### Opinion

A thought about something or someone.

#### Belief

Something that someone believes to be true but cannot prove it.

## Parental Controls

### Consoles

All consoles offer parental controls such as limiting the time spent on the device or restricting who your child can communicate with. Find out the specific settings below:



### PlayStation

Set up your account as a family manager and create a separate child account so you can tailor their activities. Find out more here:

[Safety for parents \(UK\)](#)  
[\(playstation.com\)](#)



### Xbox

You can download an app to manage your child's gaming Experience. Find out more here:

[Xbox family settings: peace of mind for parents](#) | [Xbox](#)



### Nintendo Switch

Nintendo also offer a free app to monitor what and how your children are playing. Find out more here:

[Nintendo Switch Parental Controls | Hardware](#) | [Nintendo](#)



### Mobiles/ Tablets

You can set up parental controls and restrictions on most mobile devices, which can limit what your child can access.

Additionally, make sure appropriate settings are applied on the apps your child is using.

### Apple

[Use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad and iPod touch – Apple Support \(UK\)](#)

### Android Devices

[Family Link from Google - Family Safety & Parental Control Tools](#)  
[\(families.google\)](#)

### Further Information

[Set up devices for children - Internet Matters](#)

# Fortnite Battle Royale

**Fortnite Battle Royale** is rated PEGI 12 because it features moderate violence which means it is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age.



It is important to remember that when rating games, PEGI do not take into consideration the communication features of a game. Fortnite does include a chat facility, which adds further risks.

### What is Fortnite?

There are different versions of Fortnite, including Battle Royale, which is free to play (although in-app purchases are available). In Battle Royale up to one hundred players compete against each other.

### What do I need to be aware of?

- Chatting to strangers and inappropriate language: Fortnite contains voice and text chat. Due to the nature of the game, your child may be chatting to strangers and may hear inappropriate language. Ensure your child knows how to report players for any inappropriate behaviour.
- In app purchases: All users can purchase V-Bucks directly through the game so make sure you don't store your card details within the game/device and restrict purchases.

### Parental Controls

Fortnite includes several parental controls to help you make it a safer environment for your child including disabling voice chat, filtering language and setting privacy settings. Also, remember to set up age-appropriate parental controls on the device your child is playing on.

### Further information

Virgin Media outline how to set up the different parental controls available: [Parental Controls within Fortnite | Guide | Virgin Media](#)

### Encountering violent online content starts at primary school.

New research commissioned by Ofcom reported that "all children who took part in the research came across violent content online, mostly via social media, video-sharing and messaging sites and apps. Many tell us this is before they have reached the minimum age requirement to use these services." You can read more about Ofcom's findings here:

[Encountering violent online content starts at primary school - Ofcom](#)

### Online Gaming Safety Tips: For parents/carers of neurodivergent young people

Internet Matters have published guidance outlining the benefits and risks of online gaming and how you can support your neurodivergent child.

You can read the guide here: [Neurodivergent young people and gaming | Internet Matters](#)

## Online Challenges

Our children may not have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse all situations yet so it is important to talk to your child about hoaxes and challenges that may appear on the internet. Some challenges are fun and provide no risk, however there will be challenges that are risky and dangerous. Just recently, a child sadly died after participating in a challenge - more information here:

[Dangerous Challenge Raises Serious Safeguarding Concerns - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#)

Your child may see others complete certain challenges online without being harmed and therefore may want to repeat them and not consider the potential risks to themselves. Make sure they know that they should talk to you (or another trusted adult) about what they see online, particularly if they plan to try a challenge.

We would always advise that if your child has not heard about an online challenge, then do not draw attention to it as this may lead to them searching for it out of curiosity, so just talk about challenges in a general sense. Furthermore, reassure your child that challenges that suggest that terrible things will happen if they do not complete the tasks are not real.

The following link will provide you with further information as well as content to help you talk to your child:

[Online Viral Challenges – Advice For Parents | Internet Matters](#)

TikTok have also produced this resource to help you talk to your child about challenges and the potential risks:

[Online challenges | TikTok](#)

## 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 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 appropriate security/privacy settings are applied.

### **Account set up**

As always, it is important that when setting up an account, your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15. In addition, advertisements are tailored to their age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private 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: [Account settings | TikTok](#)

### **Family Pairing**

This allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode. You can find out more here: [Guardian's Guide | TikTok](#)

### **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.

### **Trends and Influencers**

We often see trends on social media, for example a latest trend found is around skin care routines, which can lead to children purchasing products that are completely unsuitable/dangerous for their skin. You can find out more here: [Exploring the Rise of Skin Care Routines for Tweens | Bark](#). Influencers are people who have a large following on social media who through recommendations and promotions, influence the behaviour or buying habits of others. The NSPCC discuss what we need to be aware of here: [The influencers of influencers | NSPCC](#)

### **Stranger contact**

Talk to your child about who is following them online and ensure that they understand that people may not be who they say they are when online. It is important that children know not to share personal information.

### **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.

**Further information** [TikTok](#) | [Parent Zone](#) | [At the heart of digital family life](#)

# Mental Health

## Is being online affecting your child's mental health?

There are many positives to being online including learning new skills, playing games and connecting with friends as well as many more. At the same time, we do need to be aware of some of the negative aspects of the online world to ensure that we help our children strike the right balance between their online and offline lives. Being involved with your child's online world can help you to support your child's mental health and well-being more. Below are some of the issues our children talk about during Tech Thursday worship:

- Social media (spending too much time on social media, comparing ourselves to others, filtered images and desire to achieve likes)
- Cyberbullying
- Inappropriate content
- Constantly connected/information overload
- Too much screentime
- Negative impact on our sleep

For more information on supporting your child's digital wellbeing including top tips and conversation starters:

Childnet discusses digital wellbeing in more detail and includes top tips and conversation starters: [Digital wellbeing | Childnet](#)

The NSPCC also provide further information about mental health including signs to look out for and how to get further support:

[How to support a child with depression or anxiety | NSPCC](#)

# Managing Screentime

Are you worried your child has too much screentime or would like more advice on how to support your child in managing their screen time? Internet Matters have a wealth of information on their website to help support you.

This first link discusses how to get the most out of screen time and how to talk to your child about screen time based on their age:

[Managing children screen time - Parent advice | Internet Matters](#)

This second link provides advice on how to tackle too much screen time and what the signs of too much screen time might be:

[Dealing with risks from too much screen time | Internet Matter \(internetmatters.org\)](#)

This final link provides a guide on how to balance screen time:

[Creating a balanced digital diet with screen time tips | Internet Matters](#)

## Smartphone Free Childhood

Smartphone Free Childhood is a parent-led movement whose mission is to protect children from the dangers of using smartphones too young.

The premise behind this movement is that all parents/carers of a class all agree not to give their children smartphones (therefore the level of peer pressure is reduced) for a set time or until a specific age. Are you ready to join? Find out more here: [Smartphone Free Childhood](#)

You may feel your child does need a phone, particularly if they are walking home by themselves but there are alternatives to the smartphone, including a watch, which are listed here:

[alternatives — Smartphone Free Childhood](#)

If you are thinking about giving your child their own phone, then you might find this article from Family Lives useful as it discusses things you will need to consider:

[Does your child need a mobile phone? | Family Lives](#)

If your child already has a smartphone then Internet Matters have a section on their website with advice on smartphone safety:

[Get smart about smartphone safety | Internet Matters](#)



# For Your Information

## Poppy Playtime

It is important that you are aware that whilst the name and characters suggest a playful game, it is a **survival horror game with graphics that may not be suitable for your child.** It includes characters such as 'Kissy Wissy' and 'Huggy Wuggy.'

**Please view this game before allowing your child to play it as it may not be appropriate for them – particularly young children.**

Children may be playing the game or just watching videos of it on sites such as YouTube or playing replicated versions on Roblox for example.

Further information Safer Schools NI have produced this informative: [Huggy Wuggy and Poppy Playtime Online Safety Review – Update - Safer Schools NI](#)



## Talking to strangers online

There are many apps/websites where your child may come across strangers contacting them. Some platforms will allow you to set who can contact your child as well as switch off communication so ensure appropriate settings are explored and set up.

This article from ThinkUKnow talks about how to protect your child from adult content and contact: [Online contact and staying safe \(ceopeducation.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/keeping-your-child-safe/online-contact-and-staying-safe/)



## WhatsApp Group warning

Whilst WhatsApp has an age rating of 13+ (recently lowered from 16), a BBC Investigation has found that children as young as nine have been added to WhatsApp groups and seen inappropriate content. If your child is using WhatsApp, check their group settings as by default, group privacy settings are set to 'everyone,' which means anybody can add your child to a group without their approval. You can change this setting to 'My Contacts' so only contacts can add them to groups without their approval and if somebody who is not a contact wants to add them to a group then they will need to send them an invite.

You should talk to your child about the risks of joining groups and show them how to use the reporting/blocking tools. You can find out more about the BBC investigation here: [Nine-year-olds added to malicious WhatsApp groups - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56844444)



## Group Chats

Group Chats are available on various messaging apps, social media apps and in some games. When your child is part of these groups, they may not know all the other members and it may even include people that they have previously blocked. Your child may come across inappropriate content and bullying can take place within these groups. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face. The NSPCC provide further information about group chats here: [Chat apps | NSPCC](#)

# National Online Safety is Now Part of The National College



**Frimley Church of England Junior School** is a member of The National College – a multi-award-winning online training provider for staff and parents.

## What does this mean for you?

As part of our school membership, The National College provides dedicated training and resources for parents and carers – particularly, around online safety and keeping children safe online.

## Online safety advice on any topic

Of course, staff will continue to teach children about the risks online. But with the internet so readily accessible, the most effective approach to online safety needs everyone involved, including parents and carers.

That's why you've now got access to **hundreds of courses, explainer videos and online safety guides** to support your awareness of the online world. Topics range from understanding apps like TikTok and Instagram to recognising the signs of online harm and what you can do to help.

## Sign up is easy

If you haven't already done so, please sign up to the platform. Signing up is simple. Just follow <https://nationalcollege.com/enrol/frimley-cofe-junior-school> and complete your details. Once you're set up, you'll be able to choose 'Parent/Carer' as your user type and get instant access to all training and resources.

## Download the app for free

Another fantastic benefit of The National College is its National Online Safety app, which you can download for free. It gives you access to all their parent and carer resources on the go, whenever you want.

You can download the National Online Safety app using the links below:

[App store](#)

[Google Play](#)

The National College has a brilliant support team if you have any questions. Their [help centre](#) provides a comprehensive bank of answers to most FAQs, but if you still can't find the answer you're looking for, you can always get in [contact](#) with them.

I hope you'll sign-up and make the most of their resources.

