Online Safety News
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Six tips to keep your family safer online

WhatsApp Groups

1.**Protect your Systems:**
Install anti virus on all devices in the home, including your children's. Keep your systems updated as this will help fix and bugs or vulnerabilities.

2**. Teach your child to set strong passwords.** A mixture containing numbers, letters and symbols that would be hard to guess. Nothing containing their date of birth, names, address or pet names.

3.**Keep personal information private**. Explain what personal information is and check their contact list regularly. Make sure they only connect with people they know and have met.

4. **Show them what suspicious messages look like.** Phishing emails often have poor spelling and grammar and tend to make urgent requests for money or information. Children are easy targets for cyber criminals so ask them to come to you with any odd-looking links or messages explain they must never click on a link.

5. **Set up parental controls.** These will help you monitor and restrict what content your child sees online, what sites they can access and how long they can spend online. You can also set up SafeSearch in your web browser.

6. **Watch out for Cyberbullying.** This can take many forms but include being sent mean messages, upsetting content, having images shared of them, being harassed by text or calls. Remind your child it is ok to block and remove people if they are upsetting them.

WhatsApp is often one of the most used messaging platforms in younger children. WhatsApp Groups can quickly grow rapidly and have people your child does not know in them. A BBC investigation has found that children as young as nine have been added to WhatsApp groups and seen inappropriate content.

It is important to check your child's WhatsApp settings to prevent them being added to Groups by people they are not connected to.

You can do this by: **Open WhatsApp on their device – click on Settings (bottom right hand corner)**

Click on Privacy – Click on Groups – Who can add me to Groups – Click on My Contacts or My Contacts Except, if there are people your child is connected to whom you wish to prevent from being able to add your child to a group.

Whilst in the privacy settings in WhatsApp you can also make sure that all their other information is restricted as you wish and not set to Everyone. Last Seen & Online Profile Photo About Status

It's important to talk to your child about the risks of joining groups and how to block contacts.

FORTNITE

A very popular video game from Epic Games, offering a knife-edge gun battle that requires practice, skill, teamwork and fast reactions. But what do parents need to know:

In the UK, the Video Standards council rate Fortnite as PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence. You know your child best and can use this information to decide if Fortnite is appropriate or your child. Children under the age of 13 automatically receive a cabined account through the Epic Games Store. You must give parental permission for them to access all in-game features.

Fortnite has a variety of parental controls which are important to set up. You can:

Monitor who they talk to:
Check the online communication settings on the game to ensure your child can't talk to strangers.

Manage in-app purchases:
The game has considerable in-app purchases that you need to be aware of as many parents have discovered the costly way! Set up passwords (that only you know) on any credit cards associated with the system.

Keep track of screen time:
It can be good to have some time limits for the game to ensure that the game remains a healthy and enjoyable experience. Have games played in communal spaces at home rather than bedrooms and you can quickly see if game is becoming more of a negative than a positive influence on your child.

Finding Online Games

If you are wanting to find some new games for your child to try online or perhaps you are fed up with the guilt trip of 'but everyone else is playing this game' (which is one you don't want your child playing) you could try Game Finder.

Game Finder is a free service available from Taming Gaming which walks parents through various aspects, such as how old is your child? What devices do they have? What types of games do they like to play? And then gives a list of recommendations of suitable games.

https://www.familygamingdatabase.com/gameFinder

Teach the SMART rules

SAFE – Staying safe online involves being careful and thinking about whether it is safe to give out personal information.

MEETING – Meeting up with someone you have contacted in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your parent's/carer's permission and when they can be present.

ACCEPTING – Accepting e-mails or opening files from people you don't know can be dangerous – they may contain viruses or nasty messages.

RELIABLE – Anyone can put anything on the Internet - remember people can lie and not be who they say they are in chat rooms.

TELL – Tell your parent/carer or teacher if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.