

2020

Online Safety Guide

WALLACE HALL (2-18)

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES TIPS AND ADVICE FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND CARERS ON THE USE OF POPULAR APPS AND STREAMING SERVICES

Online Safety

Social isolation, social distancing... just a lack of physical social contact means that we are all looking for other ways to keep ourselves entertained, informed and in-touch with the world.

The internet has never been more important. Technology has never been in such demand. And the importance of a strong Wi-Fi connection has never been more valued.

But with increased online opportunities inevitably come increased online risks.

*Click on the image below to view Internet Matters' Online Safety Guide.
This has been produced to help parents keep their children safe online.*



Keeping track of new apps and games can be challenging for parents and carers.

To find out more information on software that kids are currently using visit <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/> where you will find advice and tips on each of these.

More information can also be found on the National Online Safety Facebook page - @NationalOnlineSafety

On the next few pages, you will find **online safety tips when using Houseparty, Snapchat and TikTok.**



Houseparty

What is Houseparty?

Houseparty is a live streaming app described as a face to face social network where people 'drop in' on each other to video chat, leave messages and hang out in groups.

Children under the age of 13 must have permission to use this app, however, no proof of age is required to create an account.

What you need to know about Houseparty:

- "Stranger Danger" – friends of friends can join conversations on the platform without the need to be connected or known to all users in the chat. Houseparty calls this feature 'Stranger Danger'. There is the danger of people attempting to deliberately mislead others by using false names or usernames.
- Sexualised messages – people may use live streaming apps to engage in inappropriate or illegal activities. There have been concerning reports directly linked to Houseparty where children are targeted by men exposing themselves.
- Oversharing personal information – children often do not understand the risks involved in giving out too much information in a live stream or within their profile. They may also be less protective of personal details during online conversations.

Top Tips for Parents:

- Turn on private mode – use the app settings to turn on 'private mode' which automatically locks the room, instead of doing it manually.
- Check communications – it is important to be aware of who is on your child's friends list and who they are communicating with. Remind them not to communicate with people they do not know and trust. If they experience something on the app that makes them feel uncomfortable then they should tell a trusted adult immediately. Remind your child that if they get an invite to join a Houseparty from someone they do not recognise, then they should ignore the request.
- Remove links to other apps – users can link their account to both Facebook and Snapchat or can simply share a link to their profile. We advise that you remove these links and remind your child not to publicly share access to their online profiles as there is the potential for strangers to communicate with them.
- Reporting and blocking – if your child faces a problem while using the app, they can report directly to the platform by shaking their phone. A prompt will pop up allowing them to report issues immediately. They also have the option to report and block users directly on their profile.



Snapchat

What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images, videos and chat with friends. Users can share images and videos directly to specific friends, or through a 'story' shared with their entire friends list.

Snapchat has been ranked the 4th most negative app in terms of having an impact on young people's health and wellbeing, with children feeling that they can use the app to make themselves look prettier.

What parents should know:

- Exposing your child's exact location – the 'Snap Map' lets you share your EXACT location in real-time through a map on the app. The user's location updates when the app has been opened on the device.
- Screenshots and saved messages – while Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and chats disappear eventually, users still have the capability to screenshot or record what has been sent to them. Users may forget that screenshotting is a possibility in the app and send a compromising image or message to somebody that they think they can trust.
- Snap Streaks and addiction – 'Snap Streaks' are gained when snaps have been sent back and forth consecutively between friends. The longer that snaps are sent between users, the longer the streak becomes. Children invest time into making their streaks as high as possible, which can put an incredible amount of pressure on children and their friendships to make sure their streaks are continued.

Top Tips for Parents:

- Use 'Ghost Mode' – we highly recommend enabling Ghost Mode on the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map'. To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top right corner. Here, you can change the setting to 'Ghost Mode'.
- Discuss the risks of sexting – it can be slightly awkward talking about this topic with your child, but if it helps them protect themselves, then it is worth it. Talk to them about the consequences of sexting and make sure that they are aware of the risks.
- Reporting a story, filter, snap or message – if your child comes across inappropriate Snapchat content, which may be sent directly to them or in another person's story, advise them to report it immediately. Reports can be made in the app or on the Snapchat support website: support.snapchat.com



What is TikTok?

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets users create, share and view user created videos. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect.

At the beginning of 2019, TikTok became the most downloaded app worldwide.

What you need to know:

- Mature content – TikTok is listed as 12+, however, when signing up for the app, it is possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. There have been some videos on the app which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content.
- Inappropriate music – TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit lyrics.
- Addictive nature – social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down – it is easy to turn a five-minute visit into a 45-minute visit.

Safety Tips for Parents:

- Use privacy settings – undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means that only those users your child approves can view, like and follow their content. This may clash with your child's goal of fame, but it will keep their account secure from strangers.
- Enable restricted mode – in the digital wellbeing section, there is the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. This mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this is not always 100% fool proof.
- ***New for 2020*** Family Safety Mode – this allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's. It is a great way to oversee your child's digital wellbeing by giving you direct control over their safety settings and being able to remotely turn features on and off. This includes managing screen time, the ability to send and receive direct messages and the ability to restrict the appearance of content that might not be age appropriate.

*As well as these apps, we have also provided information on the most popular streaming services in the world: **Netflix and Disney+**.*

NETFLIX

What is Netflix?

Netflix is one of the world's leading online streaming services, providing users with unlimited access to a huge selection of TV shows and films.

What you need to know:

- Inappropriate content – Netflix hosts and produces content for all ages. It has a wide variety of films and TV programmes for young children, teens and adults and its extensive catalogue can provide hours of entertainment. Children can search for almost anything, but if they share the same account as an adult, it can also open them up to viewing material that is adult themed or inappropriate.
- Binge watching – with the ability to access Netflix on almost any device, it can be easy to fall into 'binge-watching' TV series, with users finding it difficult to turn it off without knowing what happens next.

Top Tips for Parents:

- Create a Netflix Kids profile – one of the biggest advantages of Netflix is the ability to control what content your children can watch. Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile means that children only have access to TV shows and movies which have been carefully selected for kids.
- Switch off autoplay – Netflix has two autoplay features that can be switched on and off across different accounts and takes effect across all devices. Parents can disable the ability for consecutive episodes to play automatically – limiting the amount of time children spend on the app.



What is Disney+?

Disney+ is the latest big player in the TV streaming market. It's designed to be family friendly, with content restricted to PG and 12A. It can be streamed on pretty much any device and features a huge library of classic Disney titles.

Top Tips for Parents:

- Monitor your child's usage – parental controls on Disney+ are quite limited and there are no settings to help with screen time or usage, so it can be easy for children to binge watch, particularly given the amount of content available.
- Enable 'Kid's Profile' mode – although Disney+ is billed as family friendly, there is still an option to enable a 'Kid's Profile' which removes all PG and 12A rated content. Setting up a kid's profile also switches off autoplay which means the next video in any series will not automatically play once one episode has finished.



For more information surrounding online safety, please click on the links below:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parents-ultimate-guides>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Or visit our school website:

<https://www.wallacehall.co.uk/useful-apps>