

## **Online Safeguarding during school closures: guidance for parents and carers.**

Safeguarding is an important issue in education, online and offline. The contents of this document are derived from the Prevent workshop: 'Online Safety and Risks Surrounding Online Radicalisation and Extremism' delivered in Enfield. The document will:

- Introduce parents to basic online safety,
- Provide information about social media apps and gaming
- Provide tips for discussing and moderating internet use with young people
- Provide an introduction to the specific risks the internet creates relating to extremism and radicalisation.

Whilst schools are closed, it is likely that time spent online will increase. This will create many fantastic learning opportunities, but it is worth noting some of the new and existing risks that may impact young people during their time spent online. If you have a safeguarding concern, it is important that you report it straight away. **Anyone** can do this online at:

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/enfieldscb/children-young-people/worried-about-the-safety-of-a-child-report-it-now/>

You can also call the safeguarding hub on: 020 8379 5555 (out of hours: 020 8379 1000). In an emergency call 999.

### **Online and Skype Lessons:**

Most schools will be creating resources on their own preferred online learning hubs – but you may still speak to teachers individually or maintain contact with private tutors and music teachers. Following these guidelines when conducting Skype or Zoom lessons will protect the student, parent, and teacher:

- A mutually convenient time for both parent and teacher to be arranged, and the video call should take place at this time.
- The video call must be started with/by a responsible adult and should be ended by them (as an acknowledgement of the video taking place)
- The responsible adult should be in earshot throughout the call, although they do not necessarily have to continuously be in the room (but must be there at the start and the end)
- Lessons must take place in a suitable area of the house, such as a communal area (i.e. not a bedroom) with the door open throughout.
- Appropriate clothing (i.e. non revealing, no pyjamas etc) must be worn.
- Video calls should not be recorded by the parent or pupil, and will not be recorded by the teacher.
- It would not be appropriate for pupils to have access to teacher's skype/zoom contact details.

- Ideally the lesson will take place using a laptop or large tablet to ensure clarity of the image
- Lessons by video call are not a permanent replacement for school-based tuition – once the schools re-open, tuition in school should resume.

### **Online Safety – basics:**

#### **The National Picture (2019 Ofcom Report):**

- 50% of the UK's 10 year olds owned a smartphone in 2019
- The amount of young phone owners doubled between the ages of nine and ten, which Ofcom dubbed the 'age of digital independence'.
- 18% of 12-15 year olds have shared or commented on a social or political post, and one in ten have signed an online petition – the 'Greta effect'.
- 71% of boys play online games, clocking up 14.5 hours. (48% girls)
- 80% of children watch video-on-demand, and 25% watch no live TV at all.
- Almost half of parents of 5-15s are concerned about their child seeing content which might encourage them to harm themselves, up from 39% in 2018.

#### **Password safety:**

- Never share your password
- Make your password difficult to guess – include numbers, capitals and special characters.

#### **Catfishing:**

A 'catfish' is someone who pretends to be someone they're not using Facebook or other social media to create false identities, particularly to pursue deceptive online romances. They might do this for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Romance,
- Power,
- Mental health/ self esteem
- Exploitation (e.g. for money, or sexual exploitation)

Ensure that you know who your child is speaking to online and when gaming. It is important that young people understand that 'stranger danger' changes in the online sphere.

- Young people often feel as though people they meet online (e.g. through gaming) are through their friends.

*Social distancing and isolation may increase this risk, as young people seek interaction online. Make sure they have plenty of time to call/ facetime their school friends and any extended family.*

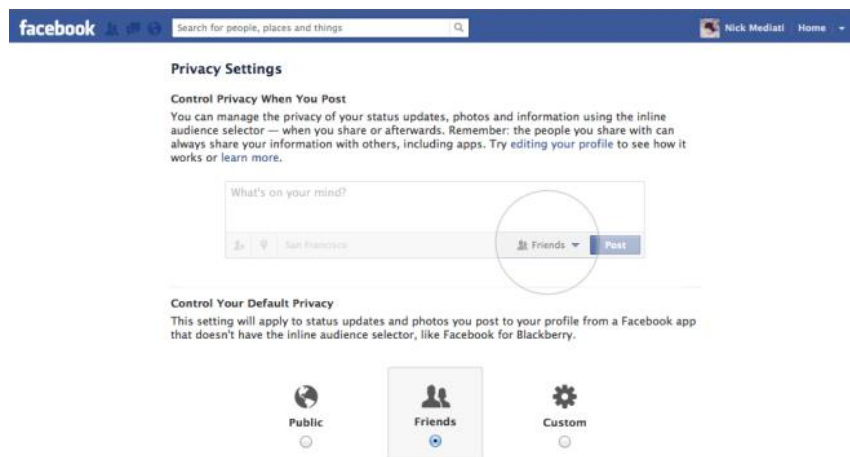
- Talk to them about the risks of anonymity, and how someone might find it easy to pretend to be someone else online.
- Make sure they know what to do if they feel uncomfortable. See page (?) for more tips on talking to young people about online safety.

### Privacy Settings:

To help protect against unwanted online communication, it is helpful to understand and use the privacy settings on all your social media apps. Make sure that you are familiar with these before allowing your young person to use an app.

Make sure your privacy settings on your social media are set so that **only your friends** can see what you post.

Make sure that the images and content you post does not contain personal information such as your date of birth, address, or bank details



### Age limits for apps:

Often the age limits for apps are much older than we think. Be aware of these limits, as apps will not need to regulate their content.

### App Age Limits:

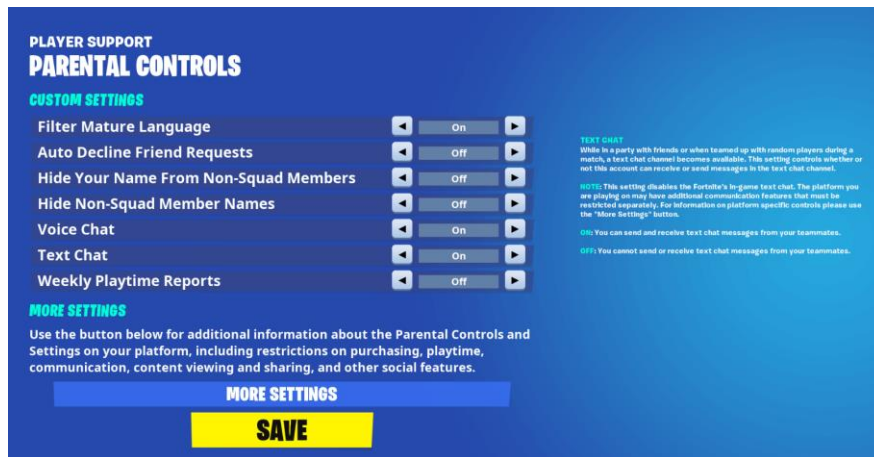
Facebook: 13	Snapchat: 13
Instagram: 13	Reddit: 13
Twitter: 13	Pinterest: 13
Tik Tok: 13	Whatsapp: 16
Messenger: 13	YouTube: 18
<i>Telegram: no limit</i>	

## Online gaming: blocking, reporting, and setting limits:

- Make sure you know how to report inappropriate behaviour or language, and that privacy controls are tight.
- If appropriate, have these conversations with your young person so they feel involved.

### EPIC GAMES STORE PARENTAL CONTROLS

The Epic Games Store offers the ability to use your PIN to restrict purchase and restrict access to content based on ratings.



### App and screen time management:

Tik Tok now has a 'family safety mode' – scanning a QR code from one phone to the other links the accounts and lets the parent password-protect certain features.

Find out more here: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/tiktoks-new-family-safety-mode-what-we-think/>

### Apps to help manage screen-time and content at home:

**Net Nanny:** Net Nanny uses Artificial Intelligence to block content before your child sees it. The app enables you to monitor your family's digital habits, limit screen time, and block specific apps and websites.

**Mobile Guardian for Home:** Similar to Net Nanny, you can block apps, websites, and YouTube content. It also enables device tracking and digital curfews for bedtime.

**QTIME:** QTIME is not an app. It is a HDMI attachment for PS4 and XBOX. It plugs in to set up an allowance and a time window each day of the week using your phone app. Once the time is up, QTIME turns the TV screen off automatically.

It may also be helpful to speak to your own internet and mobile provider about limitations you can set at home.

**Talking about online use, time management, and online safety:**

- Positive conversation:

Online gaming can provide satisfaction and positive reinforcement, it can build confidence – but that can make it addictive. Escapism and socialisation can also be big factors. Open and mature conversation with the child can help them manage their own time spent gaming and encourage their own sense of responsibility. Asking them what they would advise a friend is a great conversation starter.

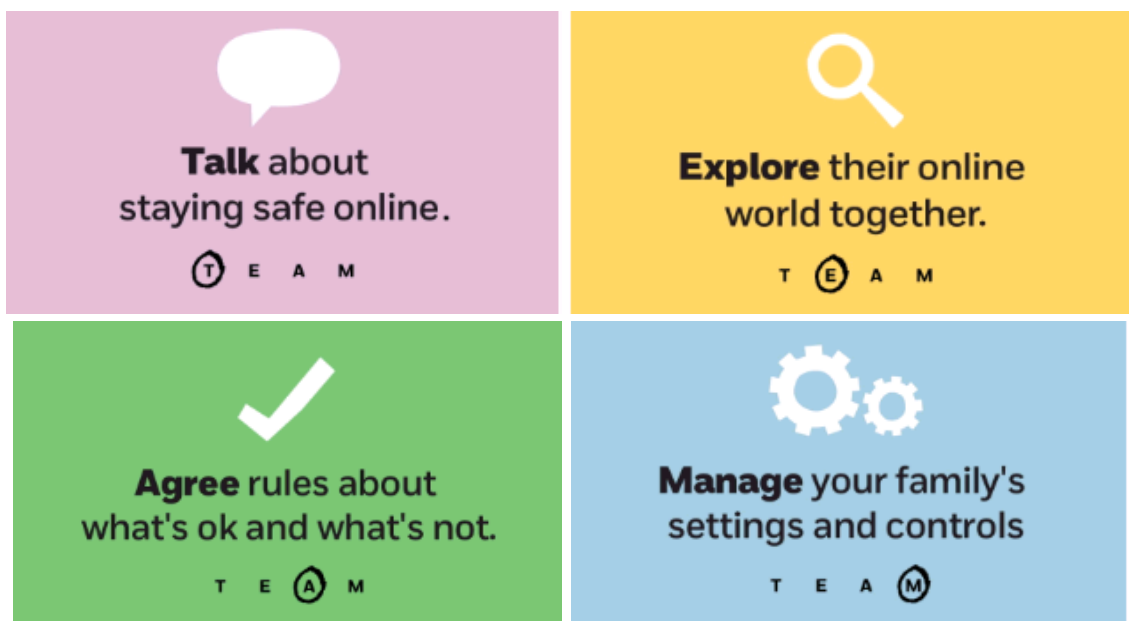
- Alternative sources

It is important to provide alternative sources of these emotions and the skills used in gaming. Sports, and even activities like cards and puzzles can provide an alternative to the fast and critical thinking utilised in gaming – just without the screen time.

- Time management

There is no need to ban gaming completely – especially during school closures! But time limitation is beneficial, especially in the evenings as ‘Blue light’ from screens affects sleep hormones.

**Work as a TEAM (NSPCC guidance):**



**For more detail on this topic follow this link:** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

### **What is Prevent?**

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent is 1 of the 4 elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

### **What does Prevent do?**

- Prevent responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who support these views
- Prevent provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- Works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.
- Prevent supports local schools, local industry, and partner agencies through engagement, advice, and training.

### **Online safeguarding and radicalisation:**

Why does Prevent care about online safety?

Identifying and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation is part of the wider safeguarding network in education. As with other forms of child exploitation, radicalisation can occur as a result of complex and interrelating factors that exploit the most vulnerable in our society.

The internet carries risks and new challenges in all areas of safeguarding, and radicalisation is no different. The internet offers terrorists and extremists the capability to communicate, collaborate, and convince.

Research has shown that the internet provides more opportunities for radicalisation, and acts as an 'echo chamber': a place where individuals find their ideas supported and echoed by other like-minded individuals. However, whilst the internet facilitates the radicalisation of individuals, it is not the sole driver, and physical contact still plays an important role.

Radical groups use online propaganda techniques such as memes, fake or doctored articles, and social media posts and videos to reach a wide-ranging audience – including young people. They often capitalise on major social and political issues. This is why it is

more important than ever to make sure that we are aware of what we consume and read online.

Prevent sits within existing safeguarding procedures. If you have a concern about something you have seen online, report it to the platform, or contact your teacher/ safeguarding lead.

### **What can we do?**

The internet and 24-hour news cycles means it is impossible to shield children from all kinds of complex and difficult stories – from terror attacks to COVID-19. It is important to facilitate good understanding of these topics, to remove uncertainty and mystery.

With open conversation and clear explanations, we can help them feel safe and reminded that the world is still a good place.

We can also encourage young people to use their ‘critical thinking’ and problem-solving skills when using the internet, so that they are able to decide for themselves if an information source is good, or if they should ask an adult.

### **NSPCC – Conversations:**

More information: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-children/>

### **Why it's good to talk:**

- Improves environment
- Emotional and social maturity
- Creates a safe space!

### **Creating the right situation**

- Whatever it is you want to discuss, it's important to think about where and how to talk so children will listen.
- Not evening when tired or less likely to concentrate
- No others around to interrupt
- Relaxed and neutral place like a walk, coffee, or the car
- Ask other parents for advice! You are not alone

- Realistic expectations – it might not go as well as you hoped but give it time. You may be able to re-approach the topic later or another day.

### **Parent Resources:**

NSPCC online safety:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Educate Against Hate (online radicalisation):

<https://educateagainsthate.com/online-radicalisation/>

Parentzone:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/home>

Guide to Apps:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/apps-guide/>

### **Talking about Coronavirus:**

As with all difficult topics, clear and factual conversations can help reassure young people, and remove any rumours or misinformation they might have heard from friends or social media. Make sure that you are well informed, using information from the World Health Organisation (WHO), or the NHS websites.

The following videos are also good starting points:

Primary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqaXBtSaiUE>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51887051>

Secondary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtN-goy9VOY>