



# Wise Owls IT

## Online Safety Newsletter

Summer Holiday 2022

### SCREEN TIME

By balancing and adding purpose to the amount of screen time your children have, they can benefit from their interaction with the world around them, through their learning and exploration.

Below are a few tips and suggestions for helping you and your child to balance screen time.



#### 1. Set rules

Clear expectations on how screen time will be used, including what online platforms and apps. Why not take advantage of the [Family Agreement](#) template available on Internet Matters to set-up your ground rules for your devices use in and out of the home.

#### 2. Priorities

Set some time for family, such as creating device free zones at meal times and switching off screens at least an hour before bedtime.

#### 3. Discovery

By enjoying activities together, you are able to stay engaged in their learning whilst creating time to chat.

### YOUTUBE KIDS

You may not be aware, but YouTube is intended for the ages of 13 and over. Due to the content, the App store rates YouTube for the ages of 17 and over!



**YouTube Kids** is a separate YouTube app/platform that is tailored for the younger age groups, filtering content from YouTube to make it suitable for children.

YouTube Kids allows parents to choose between different ages: for under 4 year-olds, 4-8 year-olds, and 8-12 year-olds.

Whilst it is difficult for YouTube to filter everything, most inappropriate content is excluded using an automated system. However, some unpleasant material can still get through making it even more important that you monitor the access your child has to online content. However, YouTube Kids includes additional controls and extra safety, including the employment of human moderators who watch the videos and monitor the content. As well as, providing playlists that are appropriate for the age group, including content from well-known educational and child-friendly companies; such as National Geographic.

Register on **YouTube Kids** to setup your child's access.



### ONLINE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Click on the image to download



## Key messages

When talking with your children it is important to share the following key messages:

- You are always available for them to come to you for help; you are there for them to talk to when they need support.
- Not everyone online is who they say they are and it is important to come to you with any worries, or if the person is asking questions or making them feel uncomfortable.
- Help your child to be critical thinkers; not everything they see or hear online is true. Try to research and find accurate information.
- Provide strategies to deal and cope with anything they may find upsetting through their experiences online.
- Keep personal information safe - including full names, contact details and locations.
- Respect others and think before you post anything online. Their actions have consequences for themselves and others. Ask before sharing information; such as, images or adding others to your group chats.

## STAYING SAFE ONLINE

It is important to keep up to date with your children's online safety by chatting with them on a regular basis. Below are a few conversation starters that may help:

- Ask your child what they do online, what sites do they visit and what do they enjoy doing.
- Ask your child if they have learnt anything new that they can tell or show you and where did they learn it.
- Does your child know what is OK to share or not OK to share?
- Where do they go for help and support, where is the safety advice, privacy setting and how do they report or block anything inappropriate on the services they use.
- Ask your child to tell you who they can talk/chat/play games with online.
- How do you use the internet as a family; is there anything you can do together online to make it fun.

ONLINE SAFETY  
IT STARTS WITH  
**YOU!**

## SMARTIE THE PENGUIN

A collection of stories are available on Childnet following the adventures of Smartie the Penguin as he learns to be safe on the internet. Themes look at pop-ups, app purchasing, inappropriate websites, cyberbullying, upsetting images, unreliable information and strangers online.



Visit: [Smartie the Penguin](#) for more information.

## MINECRAFT

An explorative world of creative thinking, geometry, geology and experimentation, through a creative landscape of structures and characters using a chunky block design.



Minecraft comes at a small fee but be mindful it also has in-app purchases, such as accessories or skins (clothing etc). Different stores have different age recommendations, ranging from the ages of 7 up to 12+. It is recommended that for the younger age group they use the single player setting, rather than registering in the multi-player communities. Multi-player games have risks due to the exposure to age-inappropriate behaviour (language, content and interactions). Moderators work in the background to limit exposures but it is not risk free. However, private 'realms' can be created for up to 10 players.

## MINECRAFT STORY MODE

There are three modes to play in Minecraft: Adventure, Creative and Survival. Each with four levels of difficulty: Peaceful, Easy, Normal and Hard. The difficulty levels determine the threatening levels of hostilities from the 'mobs' and other added challenges.

Whilst the Adventure and Survival modes are aimed towards older children; battling hostile creatures and building complex structures, the Creative mode is better suited to novices and younger age groups. It allows full access to all resources without the need to worry about defending their characters.

## FRIENDS ON MINECRAFT

It's possible for your child to play with their friends on Minecraft. It's easier on the console versions as this will require their friends gamertag or player ID to join the session. However, other methods are more complicated and require manual intervention and same server access.

Instructions for playing with friends can be found [here](#).

## MINECRAFT YOUTUBERS

YouTube is a large platform utilized by many gamers. Age-inappropriate content is also covered by gamers who offer videos on an assortment of games including, Grand Theft Auto, which is aimed at much older players. Some, such as Swedish gamer PewDiePie use strong language!

YouTubeKids will help filter age-appropriate videos or allow subscriptions to channels you've pre-approved. However, it is strongly recommended that you sit alongside your child and watch videos to gain a sense of the tone and content.

DanTDM—Dan Middleton is one such YouTuber who provides a happy, friendly feature of Minecraft and other childrens' games.



Due to the nature of Minecraft, it's very important to be aware of how engrossing it can be for children with the seemingly endless possibilities. Even if your child is learning whilst using the game, other areas of their life are important too. It's therefore vital that you monitor and help regulate their usage. Use the conversation starters and Family Agreement detailed on the previous pages. Create a calendar, set timers and reward them for sticking to the set time limits.

Information on installing parental control programs can be found [here](#).



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