



Online Safety Newsletter

May 2024

Is being online affecting our child's mental health?

There are many positives to being online, but we do need to be aware of the negative aspects including those that may impact our child's mental health and wellbeing, for example:

- **Social media**
social media, comparing images and desire to

- **Cyberbullying**
- **Seeing**
- **Constantly**

overload

- **Excessive**
- **Negative impact on our sleep**



(spending too much time on ourselves to others, filtered achieve likes).

**inappropriate content
connected/information**

screentime

Further information

- Childnet discusses digital wellbeing in more detail and includes top tips and conversation starters:

<https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/digital-wellbeing/>

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

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/>

WhatsApp Group warning

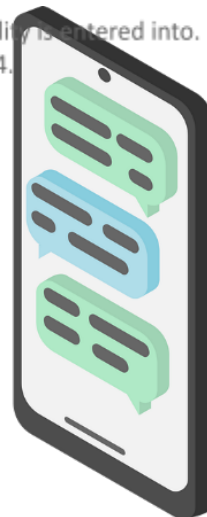
Whilst WhatsApp has an age rating of 13+ (recently lowered from 16), a BBC investigation has found that children as young as nine have been added to WhatsApp groups and seen inappropriate content. If your child is using WhatsApp, check their group settings as by default, group privacy settings are set 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

Digital Addiction

Are you worried that your child is addicted to being online/on their device? Recent research from Ofcom reported that "34% of parents of children aged 3-4 said it was hard to control it, rising to half (49%) of parents of children aged 16-17."* Bark have produced a blog which discusses what addiction is, how to recognise the signs and examples of what digital addiction can look like. You can find the blog here:
<https://www.bark.us/blog/digital-addictions/>

[*source:



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:
<https://www.flipsnack.com/internetmattersorg/guidance-for-parents-of-neurodivergent-gamers-internet-matters/full-view.html>

Misinformation online

There is a lot of information online that is incorrect/fake or misleading and it can sometimes be difficult for adults to distinguish between what is true and what is fake, never mind for younger people. We need to develop 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:

- https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/reality_check
- <https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/>

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:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwfm8hv>

Further information

- <https://saferinternet.org.uk/online-issue/misinformation>



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:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2024/encountering-violent-online-content-starts-at-primary-school>