Online safety - Using apps and games

The internet is a fantastic resource and tool where you can learn, have fun and socialise. However, the internet, like anything else, can also put you at risk if you are not careful. We want to help you to keep safe, while also allowing you to explore and learn.

Social Media Icon

Have you heard of any of these apps? Talk to your adults at home and tell them which ones you are using.

- Facebook
- Fortnite
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Whatsapp
- Youtube
- TikTok
- TimesTable RockStars

Why not try out this quiz and go head to head with your adult to <u>Guess the app-tivity</u> – this activity is a great starting point to open up discussions on how to stay safe on each app.

Tips for staying safe:

1. **Don't respond:** This is one of the hardest things to ask you to do but many users online enjoy causing trouble and some are just plain horrible. Responding is a natural reaction to this behaviour, but consider the following-

   - It gives them what they want- knowing their actions have caused upset
   - You could be reported for posting abusive comments or saying horrible things back
   - Most apps and games won't always care who started it

   *Therefore, it's good for you to be the better person and **do not respond***.

2. **Save a copy to evidence any abusive behaviour:** This is easy to do and will work on any app. By selecting a couple of buttons on your device you can save a copy of comments, posts or messages. If you're not sure how to do this, ask your parents or search on Google for your device. **Share what you have copied with someone you trust, in extreme cases it can be shared with the police.** Just because it happens online doesn't mean that the law will treat it differently.

   A huge amount of abuse can occur over headsets whilst gaming. Unplugging the headset from the controller or console will allow the chat to come through the television instead. Your adult can then film it with a mobile device. Some parents and carers may be surprised by the way other children treat other gamers online, especially their friends.

3. **Report them:** All apps and games will give you the ability to report anonymously any user who breaks the rules, or whose behaviour is unacceptable. The app will then take action; they may send a message to remind the user of the standards, remove their comments, ban the user or delete their account. Reporting someone can help keep the internet safer for others too.

4. **Block them:** This is one of the best ways to keep safe from nasty individuals. Blocking will stop the user from:
   - chatting
   - messaging
   - commenting
   - gaming
   - accessing your profile
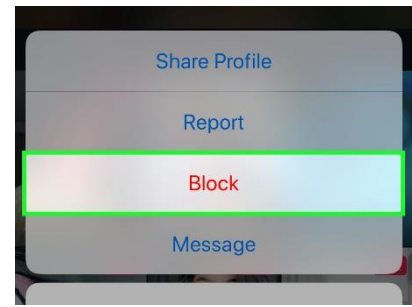
Most apps will let you unblock that user, sometimes after a certain amount of time. Even if it is your 'friend' you are blocking it doesn't mean they won't be able to play with them again. This has been shown to work in a number of friendship groups as the other user is given time to reflect on their behaviour. Although it can be an effective way to stop abuse the majority of times, blocking isn't perfect. In some apps, such as WhatsApp, they will still be able to be part of group chats.

You may be reluctant to block users as you might want to be able to see the posts or comments about you. However, this just makes the impact of the behaviour more harmful.

5. **Tell someone:** You may find it difficult to tell a trusted adult that someone is being unkind towards you online. Many children fear what might happen if they tell an adult about something that isn't their fault, for example, the loss of a device or use of an app. An analogy could be if you fall off a bike and hurt yourself, your adults won't stop you riding the bike. *Trust your adult, they will help you.*

There are many places you can go to talk. If you worry about telling a parent or carer there are others to talk to:

   - Another family member such as an auntie, uncle, or grandparent
   - Childline - by ringing 0800 1111 or visiting Childline.org.uk you can talk to a trained person. Their job is to make you feel safer and happier and remind you that you are not to blame for these things.

6. Think before you post: Don't upload or share anything you wouldn't want your parents, carers, teachers or friends seeing. Once you post something, you loose control of it, especially if someone else screenshots or shares it. Likewise, think before you post messages- is your message kind or will it upset someone?

7. Keep your device and passwords secure: You should never give out your log-on or password information. Make sure you pick strong, but easy to remember passwords. Keep things like your address, phone number, full name, school and date of birth private, and check what people can see in your privacy settings. Remember that people can use small clues like a school logo in a photo to find out a lot about you.

If you would like to find out any more information, or have a question you would like to ask, please send it to enquires@redwood.lincs.sch.uk and your class teacher would be pleased to help.