

## Duncombe School

### Safer Internet Guidance for Parents

To support our ongoing commitment to Safeguarding and Online Safety, our pupils will be doing some age appropriate work in school around safe use of the internet. This Safer Internet Guidance for Parents will back up this work.

#### What could we be doing?

*The following suggestions are part of the advice given to parents and carers by CEOP – the Child Exploitation and Online Protection service.*

- **Talk**

Talk to your children about which apps they are using on their devices – ask them what they are for. Perhaps ask them to teach you how to use the technology (children love knowing something we don't). You may need to do this fairly frequently as the landscape changes very quickly and new apps are coming online all the time. Even if you knew what they were using in the past, does not mean they are still using the same software now.

Talk to them about the information in this document – the potential problems and solutions. We do not want to scare our children, but knowledge is a powerful tool.

- **Check privacy settings**

Check what **privacy settings** are in place on the all apps/sites. Even apps that do not appear to be social networks provide the opportunity for people to learn about or contact children. Many apps/sites/games have privacy settings which will allow you to choose how visible you are to others. Many default to limited or no privacy so these **settings need to be changed manually**.

Our recommendation would be for privacy to be set at the highest level. **Many apps/sites default to limited or no privacy, so these settings need to be changed manually. When the app updates automatically, privacy settings may change without you knowing so it is worth checking regularly.**

Many mobile apps will also default to showing the users location using GPS. You may need to turn this off manually. If these or similar privacy options are not available, **please do not allow children to use the app/site.**

- **Share**

Please try and share access to the internet with your children and be involved in their digital lives. You do not have to be sat next to them but being able to walk past on occasion and glance at the screen is an effective way of ensuring that they use these apps sensibly. Talk to them about what they are posting. If they do not want to talk to you about it then they probably know it is not a good idea.

- **Use parental controls and filters**

Major internet providers and games consoles/device manufacturers allow parents to control children's access to the internet. The [UK Safer Internet Centre](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/) contains useful guidance.

- **Take note of age limits**

Some apps/sites have age limits. They are there for a reason – please do not encourage pupils under these age limits to use the app/site. Allowing children to 'piggyback' on a parent's social network account is also discouraged as most adults have privacy settings set far lower than would be advised for a child. PEGI ratings (<https://pegi.info/what-do-the-labels-mean>) are also an effective guide to whether children should be playing a particular game.

- **There is no 'safe' way to be unsafe**

Children and young people sometimes view apps/sites as 'safe'. Snapchat is a good example of this as anything posted on the app disappears after a short time. This makes it *seem* safe and therefore there is no need to be sensible. The problem is that this does not prevent people from taking a screen shot or using other technology to save and keep these images. There is no software that makes it 'safe' for children to share personal information or inappropriate images of themselves.

- **Follow up**

Many of the pupils will have discussed how to stay safe online and will remember their previous learning. Pupils will be covering these issues regularly but there is a particular focus at the beginning of the academic year and during Safer Internet Week in February. Ask your child to tell you about how to stay safe on the internet. Hopefully they will share some of the following pointers.

- Do not interact with people online that you do not know in real life
- Do not trust that people online are who they claim to be
- Do not give out personal information. For example: address, telephone number, school
- Do not post anything they would not be happy for a grandparent to see
- Never agree to meet with someone they have met online
- If they are unsure or worried, tell a parent, teacher or trusted adult

The three-episode '**Play Like Share Band Runner**' resources for 8-10 year olds have been used in the Upper School to highlight the importance of online safety.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/playlikeshare/>

Whereas, younger pupils may have watched and explored online safety through the **Jessie & Friends** resources. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/jessie-and-friends>

- **How are children and young people using the internet?**

Children today use a wide range of apps and websites for socializing, learning, and entertainment. While these platforms can offer positive experiences, they also come with potential risks. Understanding what these apps do and the dangers associated with them is an important step in keeping your child safe online.

### **Popular Apps and Potential Risks**

- **Social Media Apps (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat)**

*Risks:* Exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, and contact from strangers.

- **Gaming Platforms (e.g., Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft)**

*Risks:* In-app purchases, chat features that allow strangers to communicate, and addictive gameplay.

- **Messaging Apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Discord)**

*Risks:* Unmonitored conversations, sharing of personal information, and potential grooming.

- **Video Sharing Platforms (e.g., YouTube)**

*Risks:* Access to harmful or misleading content, targeted ads, and comment sections that may include inappropriate language.

For up-to-date information on specific apps and their safety ratings, visit [Net Aware](#). A trusted guide created by NSPCC and O2 to help parents understand apps, games, and social networks.

### **Where can I go for help and more information? (Right click the images below to follow the links.)**



Age appropriate content and has a parent/carer section. Lots of games and activities for children. Set up and run by CEOP.



National Crime Agency's CEOP Command. Click CEOP allows parents and children to report incidents and concerns.



Resources for schools and parents. Lots of useful practical advice to keep the whole family safe when online. Includes a 'Parents Guide to Technology'.



PEGI ratings are given to games much as certificates are awarded to films. They are a guide to the suitability of the game and indicate game content through symbols on the game packaging.

## Net Aware

Bringing together the NSPCC's expertise in protecting children and O2's tech know-how, Net Aware has key information on how to keep your children safe online, including guidance on the most popular apps.

### Final Top Tips for Parents

1. **Stay Informed:** Regularly check which apps your child uses and understand their features.
2. **Set Boundaries:** Use parental controls and agree on screen time limits.
3. **Talk Openly:** Encourage your child to share their online experiences and report anything that makes them uncomfortable.
4. **Privacy First:** Teach children not to share personal details like their location, school, or phone number.
5. **Model Good Habits:** Demonstrate safe and responsible internet use yourself.

If you have any queries, please contact us at [office@duncombe-school.co.uk](mailto:office@duncombe-school.co.uk).