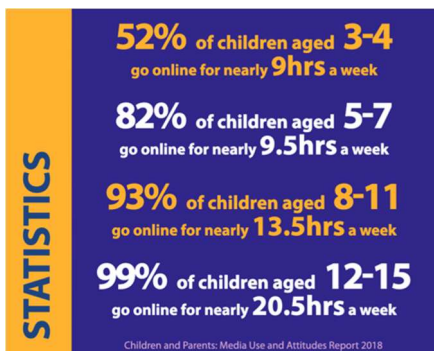# Online Safety Newsletter

Autumn 2022

Our Digital Leaders for 2022-2023.

Thank you to our Digital Leaders for their efforts with their Online Safety meeting. They answered lots of questions about our recent lessons, including how we stay safe online at school and at home.

STATISTICS

52% of children aged **3-4** go online for nearly **9hrs** a week

82% of children aged **5-7** go online for nearly **9.5hrs** a week

93% of children aged **8-11** go online for nearly **13.5hrs** a week

99% of children aged **12-15** go online for nearly **20.5hrs** a week

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018

Welcome to our first Online Safety Newsletter. We will be creating these on a termly basis, so you have up-to-date support and advice. We know the internet is an excellent resource yet there are some challenges with online safety, and it can be difficult to keep up with the latest apps.
If you do have any online safety concerns, please speak to your child's class teacher and we will endeavour to help.

Excessive Use

We recently asked pupils across school to complete computing questionnaires. This included games they play on, social media sites they use and any other information they thought was relevant. Some pupils spoke about using iPads, laptops and phones for hours at a time. In Y5/6, pupils have been learning about 'excessive use' and the potential impact on our mental health, if we play online for hours without any breaks. We have included some statistics from the National Online Safety website. We hope that families can open up a dialogue at home about using devices in a healthy way.

Chatting, being kind and making friends online

The internet has many positive opportunities for children to learn and play, but it can also be used in negative and unkind ways.
It is important to speak to your child about being kind online and asking for help, especially if they see or hear anything that makes them feel worried, scared or sad. Use these conversation starters to help your child understand the importance of being kind online.

Best Practice

- Decide what's right for your family.
- Talk to children about their online experiences: do they get random requests from strangers? Do they accept people who they do not know?
- Check your settings regularly.
- Establish some rules for inappropriate content, e.g., edited photos/videos, fake news or promoting violent or distressing content.

Many children from across the school have told us they enjoy playing on Roblox at home. We have attached a guide on how to stay safe using this app.
There are lots of guides available on the National Online Safety website, including for Tik Tok, FIFA, Be Real, Instagram and many others.

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides

Useful websites

https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

Miss Tillson (Computing Lead)
St. Peter's Elwick C of E Primary School & Hart Primary School

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
ROBLOX

PEGI RATING 7+

Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market. By 2020, the game's makers were claiming that more than half of children in the USA play it. As a 'sandbox' title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to communicate online (including a group chat facility). This could expose children to risks such as scammers, online predators, harassment, griefers and more. The in-game chat has some filters, but isn't perfect: players can still send harmful messages to others – such as general hostility – while predators can reach out to children directly.

PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some games and servers, therefore, will put children more at risk of contact from strangers than others.

ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODer is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this usually doesn't deter ODers. Some player-built Roblox game worlds have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is actually free to download and play, but bear in mind that there *are* some hidden costs. Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game, for example, using real money. People can also buy extra Robux (the in-game currency) to spend on cosmetic items in the game, and some private or VIP servers also have a cost.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained well on the game's official website. It's essential to enter the correct date of birth for your child, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply the appropriate chat filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING

Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, toxicity and scam attempts. The game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your child's account.

PRIVATE SERVERS

If your child has some genuine friends to play Roblox online with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, some players could invite other people – who might not necessarily be child friendly – into the private server. If your child is a Roblox fan, it's important to talk with them regularly about who they are playing the game with.

MONITOR SPENDING

If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizeable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that you have two-factor authentication on your payment accounts also makes it harder for your child to spend money inadvertently.

DEALING WITH STRANGERS

At some point in their development, your child will need to learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's OK to discuss – and what they should *never* tell a stranger online – will help them understand how to communicate with other people online safely.

Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.

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