Online Safety Newsletter

April 2023

Minecraft

Minecraft is one of the most popular games played online by children and young people and whilst being great entertainment it is also an excellent tool that develops planning skills and encourages creativity, like Lego, but online. There are two modes within the game, Creative which may be more suitable for younger children and Survival mode, in which the player must collect resources and build structures while surviving in their generated world. You can interact with the local villagers, and at night defend against attaching mobs.

Things to be aware of

- Children can interact with other players that *may* be strangers, you can switch this option off or choose to play offline.

- Please make sure that your child knows how to **block and report** players within the game.
- **Be aware** of In app purchases of skin packs to support game play.
- **Protect** your child's privacy by using a nickname, avoid using their age/birth year on their profile and make sure that your child knows not to share personal information when online.
- Access **family friendly servers** to avoid inappropriate language.

Further useful information can be found here and at nspcc - minecraft.

According to the terms of service, you have to be 13 to use **Instagram,** but with no age-verification process, it has been very easy for children under 13 to sign up. In recent months Instagram has rolled out age verification for users, using AI technology, describing it as a move 'to ensure an age-appropriate experience on the platform.' Please read the article from **Internet Matters** for further details.

https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/instagram-rolls-out-age-verification-for-users#:~:text=Starting%20now%2C%20users%20who%20try,age%20restriction%20of%20over%2013

CYBER SPRINTERS

The National Cyber Security Centre have introduced an interactive online resource aimed at children aged between 7 and 11 years old. It's aim is to empower them to make smart decisions about staying secure online.

The digital game, which can be found here, can be played on a phone, tablet and desktop.

Parents and carers can also try the CyberSprinter puzzles with their children at home! As well as the Cybersprinters game, you can also access puzzles that you can solve with your child.

These activities can be found here https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/cybersprinters/home-activities

When you need to feel calm, playing games that help you work through your feelings or give you a different focus can be really helpful.

Childline *have created some online games that might be useful. Have a look at the Childline website here;*
https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/

Be Smart

The **Childnet Be Smart** website has the following top tips aimed at children in the 4-11 age group, for using the internet in a safe and positive way.

S is for Safe
Keep personal information safe. When chatting or posting online don't give away things like your name, password or where you live. Remember information about you can be seen in images and videos you share too. Keep them safe to keep yourself safe.

M is for meet
Meeting up with someone you only know online, even a friend of a friend, can be dangerous as this person is still a stranger. If someone you only know online ever asks you to meet up, for personal information or for photos/videos of you then tell an adult straight away and report them together on www.thinkuknow.co.uk

A is for accepting
Think carefully before you click on or open something online (e.g. links, adverts, friend requests, photos) as you never know where they may lead to, or they may contain viruses. Do not accept something if you are unsure of who the person is or what they have sent you.

R is for reliable
You cannot trust everything you see online, some things can be out of date, inaccurate or not true. To ensure that the information you have is reliable, compare it to at least three different websites, check in books and talk to someone about what you have found.

T is for tell
Tell a trusted adult if something or someone ever makes you feel upset, worried or confused. This could be if you or someone you know is being bullied online. There are lots of people who will be able to help, your teachers, parents, carers or contact Childline – **0800 1111** or www.childline.org.uk

Be SMART with a heart
Remember to always be smart with a heart by being kind and respectful to others online. Make the internet a better place by helping your friends if they are worried or upset by anything that happens online.

Visit the Childnet website at https://www.childnet.com/young-people/4-11-year-olds/get-smart/ for more information.

A useful tool for parents with children aged between 4 and 7 is the Jessie & Friends resource from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education team.

This helps children to develop the skills and knowledge they need to help them stay safer when spending time online.

More details can be found here 4-7s-website