

## Bolney CEP School | Online Safety Newsletter– December 2024

### Dear Families

Welcome to our first newsletter of the new school year as we approach the end of our first term and the Christmas break. These newsletters are to help support you as parents and carers by providing up to date news regarding technology and to hopefully inform you of any current advice, ensuring our families are safe whenever we are using technology. We appreciate Christmas can be a happy time spent with our loved ones; however, this can lead to an increase in screen time, especially when the weather is not great. According to a latest press release, 2 out of 5 parents are more relaxed with online safety over Christmas.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION

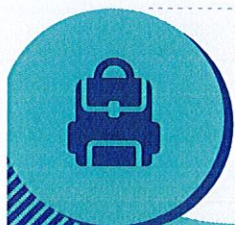


### Latest advice, current news and where to get support

I have shared this resource before but as we are only a week or so away from Christmas, I feel it is the right time to share it again. It is called 'My Family's Digital Toolkit' from the excellent website Internet Matters. A quote taken from their website, '*Get personalised online safety advice, plus a chance to win an amazing prize bundle this Christmas*' sounds like an opportunity you cannot afford to ignore! The link is below:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-family-toolkit/>

You will have the opportunity to enter a Christmas Draw; prizes consist of an iPad, football tickets and more. Not only could you win a prize, you could receive valuable information and age-specific advice and tips to support your children online, learn about popular apps and platforms your children use, get information about how to deal with any online safety concerns and lastly receive recommendations for digital tools to support their interests and wellbeing.





## Games, Apps or articles to discuss at home to help us stay safe online

I have written about Roblox on previous newsletters and through recent conversations with children, I know this is still a very current game played by many children in our school.



Last week Roblox, the game used by 90 million people daily, announced some major updates which are available to users and parents. The rollout has already started and will be fully implemented by March 2025. These safety updates include:

- Limits to how children under 13 can communicate.
- Parental controls accessible from the parents phone rather from the child's device (remote management).

For more information relating to this, please check out this link:

<https://corp.roblox.com/newsroom/2024/11/major-updates-to-our-safety-systems-and-parental-controls>

Further support for parents can also be found on this link:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/roblox-parental-controls/>

Just a last thought as it is nearly Christmas and you may be considering buying a second- hand device as a present, it's really important these devices are configured correctly for younger users. Internet Matters offers some useful guidance for you here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/guide-to-hand-me-down-devices/>

For more information on anything we have mentioned on this newsletter, please take a look at these websites:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

<https://www.childnet.com/>



As always, if you would like further support or have any questions, please contact me by email at: [cjames@bolneyprimary.school](mailto:cjames@bolneyprimary.school), Mrs Clare James



Online  
Safety  
newsletter

For our older children in the school that use smartphones, this might be worth a read: <https://www.internetmatters.org/setupsafe/>.

It has some great advice for parents/carers about staying on top of their kids smartphone use along with advice, setting up smartphones, handy things to know and more.

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## Parent - Digital Safety Newsletter

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Would you like to know more about online scams? We are running 'Are you scam savvy?' sessions that can be attended either in-person or via webinar online. Book a free ticket through [Eventbrite](#). The dates available are:

- [Crawley Library](#): Wednesday 11 December 10am – 11.30am
- [Broadfield Library](#): Wednesday 11 December 13.00pm – 14.30pm
- [Webinar](#) - 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 10-11.30am
- [Webinar](#) - 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1-2.30pm

### INSTAGRAM TEEN ACCOUNTS

By the end of November 2024, all teenagers using Instagram will automatically be placed into 'Instagram Teen Accounts'; including, under 16s automatically having their account defaulted to private, regardless of whether they are an existing user or a new user.

This new account type has built-in protections to limit who can contact them, and the content they see. Teenagers under 16 will need parental permission to change these settings.

It also aims to promote a healthier attitude to screen time, with helpful reminders, and limit exposure to online harms.

Read more [here](#) about the changes.

### GROOMING

Grooming is a process when an offender builds a relationship with a child, young person or an adult, so they can abuse them and manipulate them into doing things. The abuse is usually sexual or financial, but it can also include other illegal acts. Groomers often befriend a child by appearing to have the similar hobbies, using fake accounts and photos, they may also appear to be the same age as the child.

The NSPCC have released new statistics about the impact online grooming has on our young people:

- 7000 online grooming offences in 2023/2024
- Up 89% since 2017/2018
- 48% of offences occurred on Snapchat
- 81% of cases were against girls

To read more, visit: [NSPCC](#)

### ROBLOX

The Guardian has published a news story on the introduction of new measures on Roblox aiming to improve protection for children on the online gaming platform. Updates include greater parental controls allowing parents to monitor their children's activity on the platform; adjustments to built-in limits around how children under 13-years-old can communicate with others; and changes to content warning labels.

Read the news story [here](#).



## Your child's mental health and wellbeing: WhatsApp guide

### WhatsApp age restriction is 13+

WhatsApp is a convenient and easy way to keep in touch with others. We know that connection to others is really important in terms of our wellbeing, however we need to be aware that there are also some risks to WhatsApp use, particularly for children and young people.

#### WhatsApp and emotional wellbeing

**To start a chat on WhatsApp, all anyone needs is a person's phone number.** If a child has given their number to someone else who then adds them to a group chat, everyone in this group chat will now have access to their number. This means that complete strangers can contact them.

Does your child know what to do if they get a message from someone they don't know?

#### Who is contacting me?

**Be aware of chat lock.** Chat lock is a feature which allows WhatsApp users to keep their chats in a separate locked folder, with its own secret code. This allows users to hide conversations, even if someone checks their phone and messages. This could include messages about harmful behaviours such as self-harm and inappropriate sexual content.

#### Secrecy and chat lock

**WhatsApp has a feature which allows messages to be sent and only be viewed once.** Unfortunately, this allows users to send inappropriate and abusive content which cannot be re-opened once seen. This means there is no evidence of what has been sent. It also means that if you check your child's phone you won't see a complete picture of what they have viewed.

You can never really know what has been sent or received by your child's account.

## Disappearing content

### **Information sharing on WhatsApp can reach a lot of people, very quickly.**

This means that false information can rapidly gather momentum resulting in sharing of fake news. Children and young people may not have the critical thinking needed to understand what is real and what isn't. This also means that they may be vulnerable to scams. Internet Matters have produced a [toolkit](#) for parents and carers.

## Scams and fakes

### **Teach them to be cautious**

Guide them to ask themselves how likely a message from an unknown number is really from someone they know.

### **Adjust the settings**

You can specify who can and cannot add them to group chats. You can do this in the 'Settings' menu under the 'Groups' tab.

### **Talk to them openly**

Without judgment about what they are sharing and how they contribute. Consider with them how they can use group chats safely and that is okay to exit group chats if they feel uncomfortable.

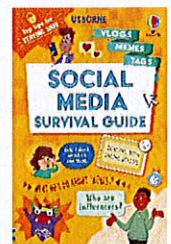
## What can we do?

### **Internet Matters: What is WhatsApp – A Guide for Parents**

[Internet Matters](#) is a fantastic website with a huge amount of information about internet safety. There are numerous guides for parent and carers, including WhatsApp.

### **Social Media Survival Guide**

A recommended book for children and young people aged 10+ to empower them to stay safe online when using social media.



## Thriving in education

For more support and advice, please visit our Thriving in Education [website](#) or scan the QR code.



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