

# St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools' Weekly Newsletter

## 10th November, 2023



**'Love one another; Always do our best; Take care of ourselves and the world around us'**



### RAAC update

Works will start on Monday, 13th November in preparation for our temporary hall. The groundworks will take approximately a week to complete, and then the hall itself will begin to take shape. We are hopeful that the temporary hall will be in place and ready to use within 3 weeks. Once we have the final sign-off complete, we can again come together as a whole school for our assemblies and lunches.

Currently, we anticipate both our junior and infant halls to remain out of use for the majority of this school year, as they are repaired by the DfE.

### How does this affect my child and me?

As the work is started and completed, the infant car park will be out of bounds.

If you bring a bike or scooter to school, the shelter will now be located on the other side of the car park. Please use the normal gate to enter, and staff will show you where you can leave your bike or scooter.

If you are in Reception or Year 1 and you bring scooter to school, please carry on using the normal entrance gate and park your scooter in the usual place along the Nursery fence.

All three pedestrian gates will remain in use whilst we have a temporary hall.



### Lest we forget...

This week we marked Remembrance Day with a whole school assembly on Monday and two minutes silence today.

A book of Remembrance is now located next to the office for any families wishing to sign it.



### Anti-Bullying Parent Workshop

Don't forget to join us on 2.40-3.10pm in the lunch hall. Learn how you can spot the signs of bullying in your child, and how we deal with any bullying concerns at our school. We have ZERO tolerance for bullying- come and find out more! Reminder: Odd Socks Day on Monday- wear your wackiest socks in celebration of our individualism for Anti-Bullying Week!



### Crazy about books!

Our children love reading- so much so that our book fair raised £237.16 towards books for our school!

Attendance winners!	
Infant School:	Junior School:
Dove 98.05%	5D 97.96%
Punctuality winners!	
Woodpecker and Dove 0 lates	3C, 3M, 4B 1 lates

*'Where great lives begin...'*



## St. Mary's Priory Catholic Infant & Junior Schools

<https://www.stmaryspriory.co.uk>

10<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

Dear parents and carers,

We will be having our Christmas Fair on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> of December from 2.00– 4.30pm. We would like to invite you, your family and all your friends to our event. We will also be selling raffle tickets from 20<sup>th</sup> November.

This year we are raising money so that children can have cultural opportunities and experiences. We would dearly like you to donate any of these items:

- Confectionary, sweets or chocolates for to sell.
- New small toys and games for to sell.
- Candles, body lotions, or fragrant sprays, soaps, creams or perfumes to sell.
- Biscuits and cakes to sell.
- Stationery such as pencils, pens, or crayons to sell.
- Bottles of drinks, orange/apple juices and squashes.

Please start bringing the donations to your class teacher starting from this Monday.

Thank you for all your support

From Mrs Georgiou and PSA

Parent Staff Association

### CHRISTMAS LUNCH

13TH DECEMBER 2023

**MAIN**

Traditional Roast Turkey with Festive Trimmings & Gravy  
(G, SU)  
or  
Roast Vegetable Wellington with a Tomato Sauce  
(E, G)

**SIDES**

Rustic Roast Potatoes, Peas, Carrots & Brussel Sprouts

**DESSERT**

Chocolate Yule Cake with Vanilla Cream  
(MK, E, G)  
or  
Fruit Pot

**Allergens:**  
CE = Celery, CR = Crustacean, E = Eggs, F = Fish, G = Cereals Containing Gluten, L = Lupin, MK = Milk, MO = Molluscs, MU = Mustard, N = Nuts, P = Peanuts, SO = Soya, SU = Sulphur, SE = Sesame Seeds \* = May Contain

*olive*  
food with passion

## Enrichment Clubs (sign up via Arbor at the start of the Autumn Term)

### Infant School

- o Dance – Wednesdays – Year 1-2
- o English – Wednesdays – Year 1-2
- o Drama – Thursdays – Reception
- o Multi Sports – Monday – Year 1-6
- o Football – Tuesdays – Year 1-3
- o Football – Thursdays – Year 4 – 6

**Why consider our online bookclub?**  
Our bookclub is a great way for young people to build strong critical and analytical reading skills. We read together, discuss, debate and develop writing skills too. Join our community of Haringey readers today.  
Contact: [info@leapsandboundsedu.com](mailto:info@leapsandboundsedu.com)

**Benefits Of Our Bookclub**

- 1 Encourages Deeper Thinking
- 2 Enhances Communication Skills
- 3 Builds Social Skills
- 4 Develops Analytical and Critical Reading Skills
- 5 Have Fun with a Community of Readers

**Leaps & Bounds**  
Enrichment Services

Weekly £7 per session

We are excited to announce the launch of the Haringey Book Club for young people!  
Each weekly session is led by a qualified English teacher who will use reciprocal reading strategies to help students develop stronger comprehension skills. Sessions are held in the early evening to encourage the habit of reading before sleeping.

The Haringey Book Club is a great way for young people to:

- Connect with other students who share their love of reading
- Develop critical thinking and discussion skills
- Build stronger comprehension skills
- Explore new ideas and perspectives
- Discover new books to love

The Haringey Book Club can help schools to:

- Promote literacy and a love of reading
- Develop students' critical thinking and discussion skills
- Improve students' comprehension skills
- Create a supportive and inclusive wider school community network.

The Haringey Book Club can help parents to:

- Encourage their children to read more
- Help their children develop their critical thinking and discussion skills
- Improve their children's comprehension skills
- Provide their children with a safe and supportive space to connect with other students who love to read

How to Get Involved  
If you are a school or parent who is interested in signing up to the Haringey Book Club, please let us know. The sessions can be self or school funded or a mixture of both. We are currently targeting students in Year 4-6. The cost is £7 a week with discounts available for block bookings.

We hope you will join us in promoting the magic of reading with our young people!  
Contact Odette Brooks at [info@leapsandboundsedu.com](mailto:info@leapsandboundsedu.com)

### Junior School

- o Geography – Mondays – Year 3-4
- o Arts & Crafts – Wednesdays – Year 3-5
- o Boxing – Wednesday – KS2
- o Netballing – Tuesdays – KS2

When: What: Who: Where: Time:

Every Monday/Friday	Gaelic Football (Mon) and Cricket (Fri) taught by professional coaches	KS2 children	Astroturf	All day
13th November	Odd Socks Day! To kick off Anti-Bullying week, we would like the children to come in wearing odd socks (children should wear their uniform as usual).			
15th and 16th November	Reception parent meeting on EYFSP	Reception parents	Infant School	15th-9am 16th-2pm
15th November	Anti-Bullying Workshop for parents	All parents	Lunchhall	2.30pm
17th November	Children in Need Non-uniform Day. The theme this year is 'spots' so you can try to incorporate spots into your outfit. You can donate to this worthy cause via Arbor as we remain a cashless school.	All children		
1st December	Nasal flu spray being administered- please make sure you complete the permissions if you want your child to receive the spray.	Reception-Year 6		
13th December	Christmas Dinner	All children	Lunch hall	Lunchtime
14th December	The PSA's Christmas Fair! School closed early at 2pm	St Mary's Community	Hall	2pm



# Stars of the Week



Owl Class	Satiro	Katie
Penguin Class	Thea	William
Robin Class	Lucas	Mariachiara
Woodpecker Class	Jayden	Esther
Dove Class	Isaac	Angelo
3C	Kevin	Isabelle
3M	Mar-Vell	Samantha
4B	Deniz	Ana-Belle
5D	Wincent	Isabella
5S	Csaba	Shalom
6B	Cheyenne	Sienna
6J		Fabiana

**Congratulations to our Stars of the week!**  
**These pupils have worked exceptionally hard**  
**to stand out amongst their peers. Well done**  
**everyone!**





# Link to our Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/StMarysRCPriory>



## What's been happening at St Mary's this week?

Make sure you check out our school's Twitter account to keep up to date with what our pupils are getting up to!

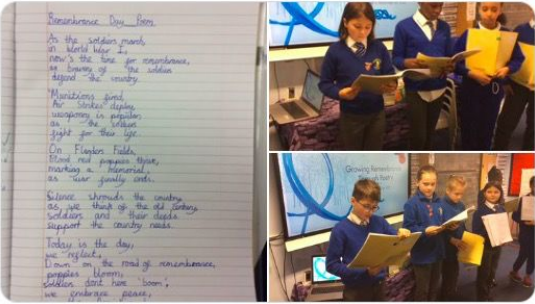
Reception painted and made poppies for Remembrance Day.



The nursery children had a wonderful time with music teacher Liz from Groundswell Arts. They used shakers and scarves to sing action songs.



6J share their heartfelt Remembrance poems, honoring our heroes and preserving the memories. #YoungPoets #RemembranceDay





**Exciting news for the next academic year!**

**There will be a Parent and baby Group at St. Mary's Priory Catholic School every Friday at **9am to 10am****



**Everyone with a baby is welcome!**

**Dear Parents,**

**we are inviting you and your baby to come along and enjoy a space with other parents, going through the same experiences as you. You will share the experiences and learn about your baby's development.**

**The facilitator: Gloria Jaramillo (Child Counsellor currently working with children across the schools)**

**Starting date: 8th September 2023**

**Email: [admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk)**

**Phone: 020 8800 9305**

**Hermitage Road, London N15 5RE**





**Exciting news for the next academic year!**

**There will be a Parent and baby Group at St.  
Mary's Priory Catholic School every Monday at  
*9am to 10.30am***



**Everyone with a toddler is welcome!**

**Dear Parents,**

**You are invited to participate with their toddler (1 to 3-year-old) in a space to play, talk and learn together about your child's development.**

**The facilitator: Gloria Jaramillo (Child Counsellor currently working with children across the schools)**

**Starting date: Monday 11th September 2023**

**Email: [admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk)**

**Phone: 020 8800 9305**

**Hermitage Road, London N15 5RE**

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LONDON

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Did you know,  
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funding through  
the **Pupil Premium**  
for every child who is  
eligible for **Free  
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**CLAIM  
FREE  
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MEALS**



The funding is used to boost learning outcomes for pupils so every child in Haringey can achieve their full potential.

So, if you're eligible, speak to your school and complete a Free School Meals application today!

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to learn  
more!



[www.haringey.gov.uk/FSM](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/FSM)

\*Please see the list of qualifying benefits on our website.



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**Haringey**  
LONDON

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Did you know, schools get up to **£1455** for every child who is eligible for **Free School Meals?**

**Pupil Premium** funding is used to help all children reach their full potential by:

**Enhancing education**

**Enriching the curriculum**

**Boosting learning outcomes**

So, if you're eligible, speak to your school and complete a free school meals application today!

**CLAIM  
FREE  
SCHOOL  
MEALS**



scan me  
to learn  
more!



[www.haringey.gov.uk/FSM](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/FSM)

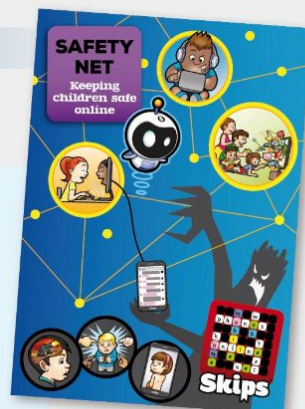
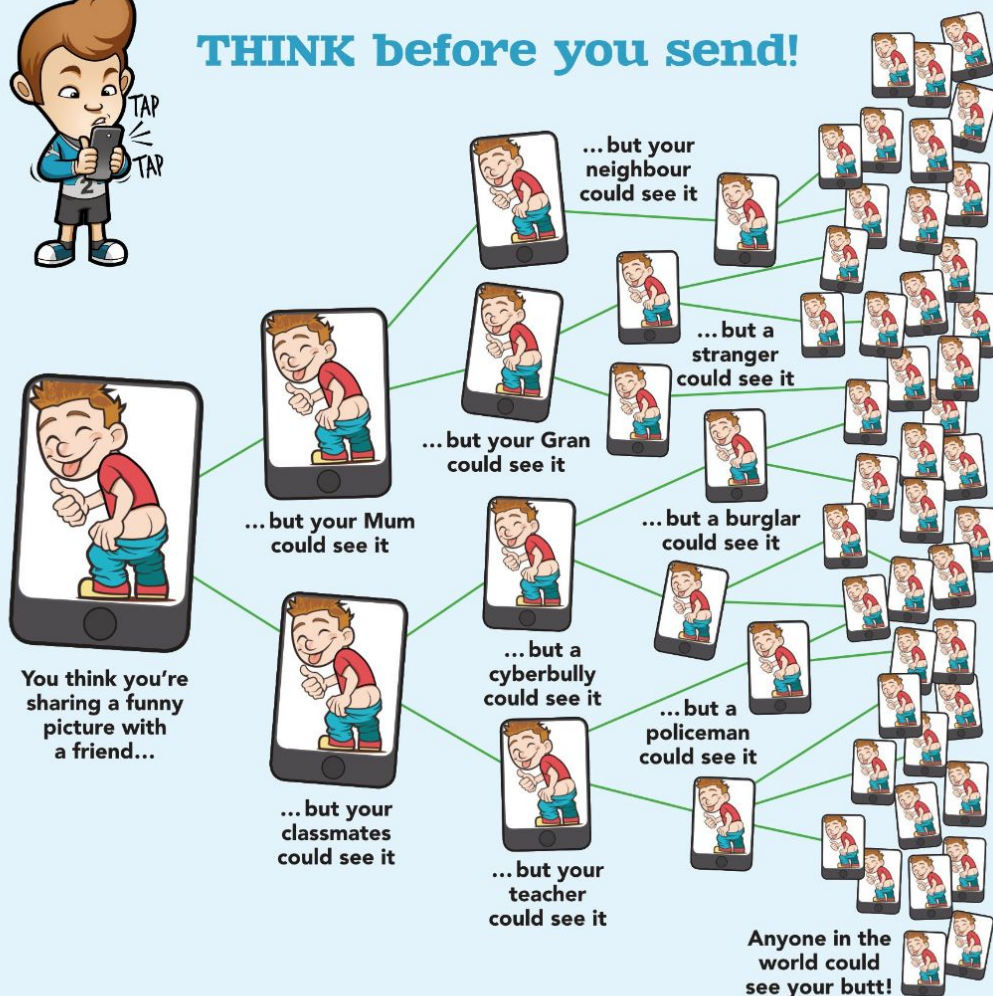
\*Please see the list of qualifying benefits on our website.



### Parent Guides to Online Safety



**THINK before you send!**



scan the QR code with your phone's camera for Parent Guides on how to help keep your children safe online



### If you share it, you are involved

**If you have, or forward an indecent image of someone under 18, it is a criminal offence. It can affect your future.**

**Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.**

**Parents** please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

**Skips Educational** Email: [info@skipsed.com](mailto:info@skipsed.com) Tel: +44 121 227 1941

Developed in partnership with





# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions (often abbreviated as "MTX") are digital purchases made within an app or game to unlock extra features or additional content such as new levels. A popular sub-set of these are loot boxes, which contain a selection (usually random) of virtual items: from character skins to game-changing equipment like better weapons. Microtransactions (and loot boxes in particular) are now widespread in apps and games, but concerns persist that they normalise gambling and can foster addictive behaviours – especially among younger players.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### GATEWAY TO GAMBLING?

Microtransactions have been criticised for promoting gambling-adjacent behaviour in children. Research has also suggested that exposure to the loot box system could affect the likelihood of a young person suffering gambling harms later in life: children who purchased or used loot boxes in the last 12 months were found to be more likely to have gambled during the same period, as well.

### ADDICTIVE NATURE

Microtransactions (and loot boxes especially) could lead to young people displaying compulsive behaviours. Loot boxes are designed to be addictive, and the sought-after prizes they contain are dispensed at random. This means that young gamers might not get what they want straight away, causing them to spend more money as well as additional time gaming.

### PAYING TO WIN

In many popular games (the FIFA series being a notable example), microtransactions make it far easier to succeed – which is a concern because children can often find it difficult to keep track of their spending. Once a child starts making in-game purchases, they may continue buying to keep up with their friends and other players, sometimes without recognising the mounting real-world cost.

## EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

### DATA COLLECTION

To allow a young person to complete microtransactions, many app and game developers collect personal data such as their name, address, email, geolocation information, photos, payment details and so on. Even if this data remains secure (which is by no means guaranteed), there's always the chance that it will be used – and possibly sold on to third parties – for marketing purposes.

### AFFECTING DAILY ROUTINE

Online games tend to revolve around repeated loops of activity that can affect purchasing decisions and potentially influence children's spending patterns. This could lead to your child not only handing over more money but also adjusting their daily routine to match the game's schedule – potentially impacting more important elements of their day, such as homework and family time.

### SATELLITE SPENDING

If you've linked a payment method like a debit card or a PayPal account to your child's game or app, it's wise to keep a close eye on their microtransactions to ensure they aren't racking up a large bill. Letting a child have access to your card (if they're still too young to have their own) or other means of payment could also lead to them spending beyond the apps and games they normally use.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's important to have a serviceable idea of whether the games your child plays use the loot box system (even if it goes by a different name) or include the option of buying items, equipment and so forth. If so, it's crucial to help your child understand that this costs actual money, and that they shouldn't feel pressured into making any purchases.

### CHAT ABOUT 'CHANCE'

It may help to explain to your child that many microtransactions involve an element of chance: they could pay money and still not get what they want in return. Emphasise that – while not usually costing much individually – these in-app and in-game purchases can soon add up. Talk to your child about how spending their money in a game or app means they have less to use in the real world.

### (GIFT) CARDS ON THE TABLE

Investing in an in-game currency gift card can be a useful way of helping your child get to grips with budgeting. If you buy, say, a £10 V-bucks Fortnite gift card, monitor how long it takes them to spend it. When they come to you asking for more, you could make it the starting point for a conversation about how quickly that money went and how they could earn their next gift card.

### STOP SPENDING AT SOURCE

You might decide that the wisest strategy is to remove the potential for spending money on microtransactions. If so, most games, apps and devices have options in their settings to help you manage what your child can spend – or to disable that function altogether, preventing them from buying additional items for their games or boosted functionality for certain apps.

### WATCH FOR THE SIGNS

If you're worried that your child's passion for a particular game or app may tempt them into habitual spending on microtransactions, it's important to remember the indicators of addictive behaviour. Irritability, a lack of concentration and prioritising recreational screen time ahead of homework or mealtimes could all be signs that you need to have a conversation about a more balanced routine.

## Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech blog *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

In October 2022, the enormously popular social media network Twitter was purchased by tech tycoon Elon Musk. That sparked a host of changes to the platform – not all which have been received positively by its fans. The alterations have continued with each passing month, many of them raising online safety concerns among the 530 million users of Twitter (now rebranded as simply X). With further adjustments reportedly in the pipeline, X has attracted more than its usual share of controversy and caution in recent times.

## A BLOCK ON BLOCKING

X has announced plans to remove its blocking feature. Previously, this stopped other users from viewing your profile or sending you direct messages, while also hiding their posts from your feed. Only this latter function will now remain. The decision has been criticised by some members, who feel that blocking (in its current form) protects them from X users who promote denial and hatred.

## LIMITED REPORTING FEATURES

X offers a premium membership, with some functionality (such as controlling who can view and reply to your posts) increasingly being made exclusive to those who pay the subscription fee. Several commentators have speculated that X could one day become an exclusively paid-for service, with access to accounts being revoked for anyone unwilling or unable to take out a subscription.

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Many of X's less age-appropriate posts can feature anything from extreme political views to pornography. While accounts marked as 18+ are restricted from non-members, it's still fairly easy to stumble across this material accidentally. X's new 'For You' page also shows content from accounts that a user doesn't already follow – meaning that almost anything could end up on a child's feed.

## VERIFICATION FOR SALE

Historically, Twitter's moderators granted account verification: certifying someone as authentic by placing a blue tick next to their username. One of X's earliest changes was to place verification behind a paywall; this caused the number of celebrity impersonators to rise and left no way to distinguish, say, a legitimate influencer from a copycat fake account seeking to exploit other users.

**BLUE TICK SALE**

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### PROTECT PRIVACY

Unsavory characters may try to gain access to a young person's X account – either to view their posts and gather information on them, or to completely take control of it. To minimise risk, ensure the account has a strong password and enable the 'Protect Your Posts' feature (via the account settings), so that strangers can't view your child's posts without first being approved as a follower.

### DON'T RISE TO THE BAIT

To gain more views and followers, some X users post deliberately inflammatory comments on sensitive topics such as race, sexual orientation and gender issues. Many young people could find this upsetting. Emphasise that, if your child encounters someone spreading hate on X, it's best not to give that person what they want: an argument. Ignore them, mute their account and move on.

### STAY ALERT FOR IMPOSTERS

Make sure your child understands that X's blue ticks no longer guarantee the identity of anyone on the platform. While it might be exciting if a celebrity liked your child's post, it could just as easily be an imposter with malicious intentions. If your child's not 100% sure that an X user actually is who they claim to be, advise them to err on the side of caution and avoid interacting with that account.

### ONLY FOLLOW TRUSTED ACCOUNTS

Using the 'Following' tab on X helps to ensure that the only content your child sees has come from accounts they've chosen to follow: this should reduce the chance of them inadvertently being exposed to harmful, violent or explicit content. Show your child how to report another user's account if, say, they're behaving inappropriately by spreading misinformation or offensive opinions.

### BE READY TO TAKE ACTION

If your child suffers harassment on the platform or becomes the target of a hack, you could consider deactivating their account entirely. Recently, X's safety features have been criticised for allegedly failing to protect users' wellbeing – so if your child is being subjected to abusive messages or similar mistreatment on the platform, it might be prudent to remove them from X altogether.

## Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and experts site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. Always eager to test out the latest apps, games and online trends, he's also a parent who understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION  
**16+**  
in UK and Europe;  
rest of the world 13+

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging; WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

### CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

### FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original ... and might not be entirely factual, either.

### 'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

### CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

### VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

## Advice for Parents & Carers ...TYPING...

### EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

### ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval: you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

### THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

### CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



...HEY OSCAR...



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Source: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/an-open-letter> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/10770/883958232> | [https://faq.whatsapp.com/38405898189245/?helpref=hc\\_fnav](https://faq.whatsapp.com/38405898189245/?helpref=hc_fnav)  
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<https://www.aura.com/learn/whatsapp-scams>



# Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

## PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

## ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

## AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

## DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

## Meet Our Expert

Daniel Upcombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 15 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.



Source: <https://hipal.app/about/privacy.html>

## FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

## ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

## TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

## BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

## WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be **disposable** (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or **rechargeable** (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

### LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

### POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

### UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

### ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 1.3 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

### WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

### UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

### SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

### VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

## Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



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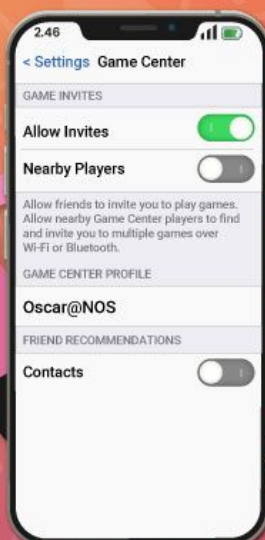
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# How to Set up PARENTAL CONTROLS for APPS iPhone

Apple devices come with built-in apps already available: Mail, FaceTime and Safari, for example. However, you can choose which apps and features appear on your child's device and which ones don't. You can also manipulate the features in Game Centre to enhance your child's safety and privacy when playing games, as well as blocking iTunes or App Store purchases if you wish.



## How to Restrict Built-in Apps/Features

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Allowed Apps (you may need to toggle this to 'on' at the top)
- 5 Enable or disable the apps you wish to appear (or disappear) on your child's device

## How to Restrict Game Centre

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Content Restrictions (you may need to switch the toggle at the top to the 'on' position)
- 5 Scroll down to Game Centre
- 6 Choose between Allow, Don't Allow, or Allow with Friends Only in the settings for each feature

## How to Restrict iTunes & App Store Purchases

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap iTunes & App Store Purchases
- 5 Select Allow or Don't Allow for each feature (you can also lock these settings with a password)



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about **AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS**

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the ‘AI friend’ or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this ‘virtual friend’ functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

## CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

## REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

## LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

## UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

## COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

## PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

## CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

## CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

## FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

## TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

## RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

## Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about INFLUENCERS

In today's digital age, social media influencers play an increasingly significant role in shaping the opinions, interests and behaviours of our children. While many of these individuals can have a positive effect, influencer culture can also present certain risks – such as encouraging consumerism, affecting self-esteem and blurring trustworthiness. To help ensure a safe online environment for young people, it's vital to maintain open communication, set sensible boundaries, promote a healthy self-image and teach digital media literacy. Our guide delves deeper into all of these.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### HEIGHTENED CONSUMERISM

A major way that influencers make money is through brand partnerships and sponsored content. As a result, children who follow them may be exposed to a steady stream of advertising; this can lead to materialistic attitudes, unrealistic expectations and an increased desire to have the latest products. Many influencers have built huge brand empires around their large, impressionable following.

### THE SOFT SELL

Some influencers aren't always transparent about the motivations behind their posts, blurring the lines between genuine recommendations and paid-for promotions – and young people sometimes find it difficult to distinguish authentic content from advertising. Many major social platforms have taken steps to make sponsored content and ads easier to identify, but it remains an area of concern.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Inspired by their favourite influencers, children may start sharing more of their own lives online – which could reveal personal information or details about their daily routine. This openness can put them at risk of cyberbullying or even predatory behaviour. This is exacerbated by live streaming, which gives young people no time to consider the potential consequences of saying too much.

### UNDERMINING SELF-ESTEEM

Many influencers share images and videos of themselves and their activities, which are often painstakingly curated and edited to present an idealised version of their life. Children who follow these influencers may develop distorted expectations about body image and the concept of beauty, which can potentially lead to negative self-esteem and even mental health issues.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### KEEP TALKING

Chat to your child about the content they consume on social media and the influencers that they like. Encourage them to think critically about what they see and hear online, and listen to any concerns they might have. Maintaining this line of open, honest communication can help your child to make informed decisions about which individuals they follow and what content they engage with.

### SET SOME BOUNDARIES

Agree age-appropriate boundaries for your child's social media use, including time limits and privacy settings (the two major operating systems on mobile devices, Android and iOS, have these controls baked in). Try to keep an eye on your child's online activity and discuss it regularly with them – including reminding them of the potential risks that can arise from following influencers.

### SUPPORT A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE

Reinforce your child's awareness that real life isn't usually as picture perfect as it may appear on social media – and how some content (particularly that of influencers) is often curated, staged or edited to look more glamorous. If possible, highlight examples of other influencers who share authentic, relatable material which acknowledges their imperfections and struggles as well.

### PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY

Talk to your child about the concepts of sponsored content, advertising and potential influencer bias. Teach them to critically evaluate the information they're presented with online and to consider the possible reasons behind content creation. This can help young people develop the skills to make healthier decisions about the influencers they choose to follow and the content they consume.

## Meet Our Expert

A former director of digital learning and currently a deputy headmaster and DSL, Brendan O'Keefe's experience and expertise gives him a clear insight into how modern digital systems impact the experience of children, staff and parents – and which strategies help to ensure that this online world remains a useful educational tool rather than a minefield of risks.



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

## 1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

## 2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

## 3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

## 4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

## 5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

## 6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

## 7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

## 8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

## 9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

## 10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

## Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-5224995>  
<https://iprussocial.com/insights/social-media-digital-well/>

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# SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR LOCAL OFFER?

The Local Offer is information for parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It explains the support we offer in Haringey for those children and young people.

- **Community groups** – Parent Carer Forum, Markfield community centre, SENDIASS and more
- **Travel assistance** – School transport service, Travel buddying, Independent Travel Training, Personal Travel Budget and paid mileage
- **Health services** – Speech and Language Therapy, Nursing Services, Physiotherapy Service, Mental Health services and more
- **Preparing young people for adulthood** – Advice on getting a job, where to live, getting the right benefits, managing your health, transition and more



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