



# Online safety at home:

## Parents and Carers Newsletter

June 2025

This will be our last online safety newsletter for this academic year. We hope that you have found the Newsletters informative and we would love to hear any feedback you may have or any issues you would like to hear more about.

We have become increasingly aware that some of our children are talking about accessing content, via apps, gaming consoles or videos which is not age appropriate and as such poses risk to their mental health and wellbeing. We would also like to highlight the importance of keeping personal information private and this includes sharing other friends' phone numbers in chat groups without their permission. We would remind you that the recommended age for children to have a WhatsApp account is 13. More information can be found here on helping keep your child safe [https://faq.whatsapp.com/1313491802751163/?helpref=hc\\_fnav](https://faq.whatsapp.com/1313491802751163/?helpref=hc_fnav)

It is important that even the youngest children in our Nursery begin to have a developmentally appropriate understanding of exploring the online world safely in the knowledge that filters, parental controls and safe search settings have been employed to help keep them from accessing inappropriate content. For older children discussing why these are necessary is a good way of including them in beginning to be responsible for their own online safety.

Below is an excerpt from Internet Matters guidance for checking whether apps, games and videos are suitable. A top tip is to watch or work through the game or app yourself or with your child before letting them explore independently so you know if there is any inappropriate language or any scenes that may not be appropriate for your child.

*"The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they are suitable for your child. For example, the **minimum age limit** is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok.*

*Make use of platforms and services designed with children in mind like CBBC, YouTubeKids, SkyKids and BBC iPlayerKids."*

*"If you let your child search independently on line make sure safe search is activated on Google or other search engines as well as enabling restricted mode on YouTubeKids. You can set your default search engine to one designed specifically for children such as Swiggle. <https://swiggle.org.uk/>*

*Encourage children to use their tech devices in shared spaces like the lounge or the kitchen so you can keep an eye on how they are using the internet and also share in their enjoyment. Encourage children to be responsible and help keep their siblings safe."*

## Smartwatches

This year has seen an increase in the number of children attending school with a smartwatch. Please note that permission to bring smartwatches into school is required and it is recommended that these should be turned off and placed in the secure mobile device box on entry to school each morning. This is to ensure that learning time is not disrupted from constant notifications and also to protect the devices at playtimes and lunchtimes. Smartwatches should not be worn when walking to and from swimming or during PE.

## Monitoring Screen Time

With the summer holidays approaching we are mindful of the amount of screen time children may be accessing.

For the youngest children in our nursery, pre-school and Reception here is a link to managing screen time for 5 and under. <https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/sections/foryou/managing-your-familys-screentime/>

For older children here are some signs to watch out for that screen time may need adjusting:

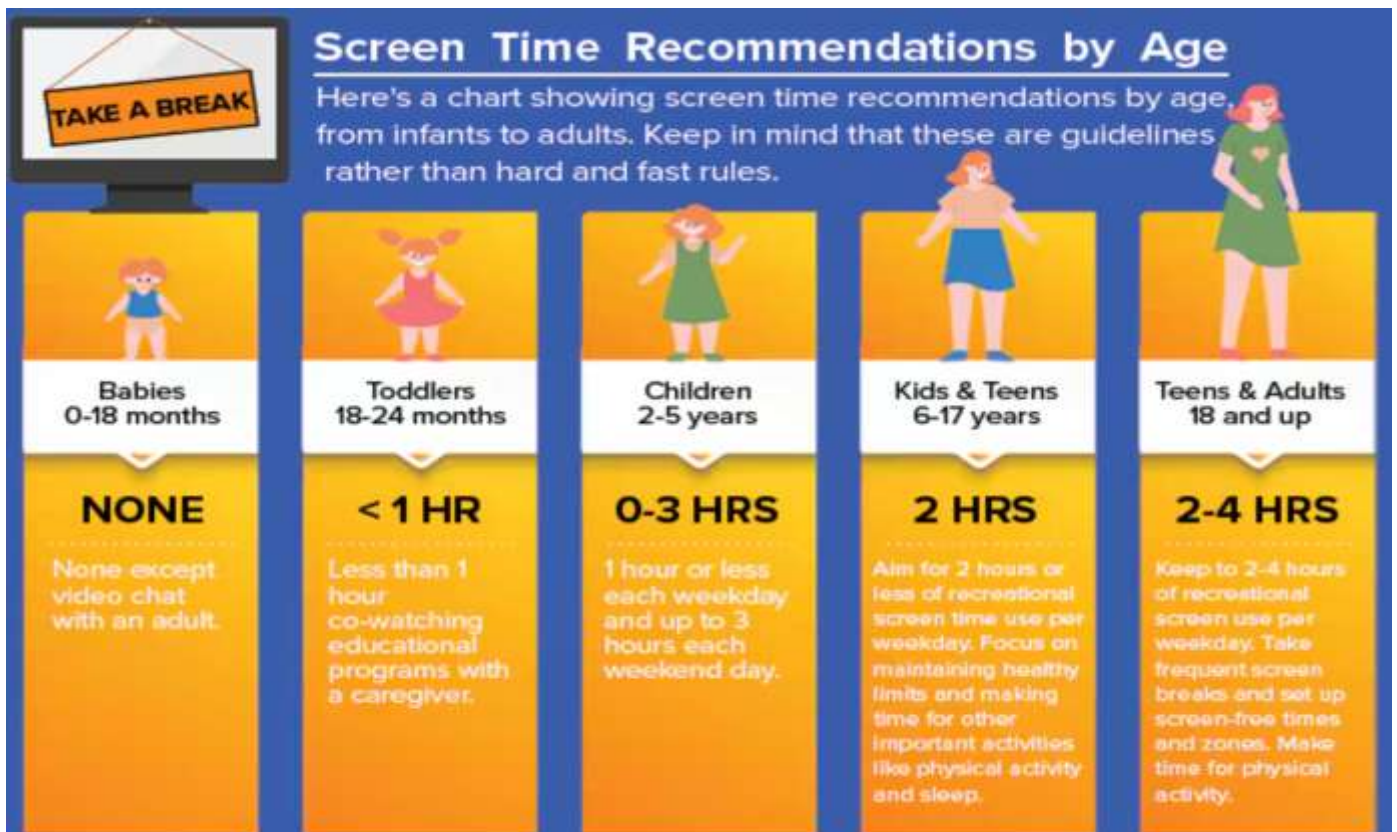
- **Anxious behaviour** when they can't access their devices. Alternatively, they might appear anxious while using their devices; some children feel compelled to use their device even when they don't want to.
- Trouble **falling or staying asleep**, potentially due to late nights or extended blue screen light from devices.
- **Difficulty focusing on other tasks** away from devices, or complete avoidance.
- Intense **mood swings or fights** when it comes to taking device breaks.

For additional support to help children balance screen time

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/screen-time/deal-with-it/>

Encouraging a mix of different activities helps ensure children are not over-exposed to screen time and are getting a variety of experiences that contribute to their development.

For school-aged children (6-12 years old), the recommendation is generally up to two hours of screen time per day. This includes time spent on devices like tablets, computers, smartphones, and TV. It's important to balance this screen time with other activities like physical exercise, creative play, and face-to-face social interaction.



## Moving to Secondary School

At this age children become more susceptible to peer pressure. This could include chasing likes on social media posts, taking part in risky online behaviour or following influencers on different platforms. They are beginning to learn more about what is and is not acceptable online behaviour.

### How can you help?

- Use a news story or personal experience that they can relate to when discussing potential risks of peer pressure and the consequences.
- Help them build digital resilience and the confidence to say “no” if they are asked to do something that puts them or others at risk.
- Apply rules and boundaries and talk about why these are important.

### Sexting

This is probably a topic that most parents believe is not relevant for their child at this age but sadly research shows that 4% of 13 year olds and 7% of 14 year olds had shared inappropriate pictures with friends with this number rising to 17% of 15-17 year olds.

### How can you help?

- Discuss the risk of sexting and what to do to resolve the situation if it does happen and it goes wrong.  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/>
- Encourage children to think about people’s intentions and motivations and to consider carefully how this may affect their wellbeing.
- Make sure they know they can always come to a trusted adult who will offer support without judgement.
- Agree on a response if they are asked to send pictures or take part in something which is inappropriate.

If you would like more information on any of these issues contained in this term’s newsletter you can find out more here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

Or by contacting Childline : <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/>