



PARENTS' SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

St Michael's C of E Primary School

Welcome to our Safeguarding Newsletter where we will share useful information with you about safeguarding your children.

At St. Michael's, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and our top priority. Everyone who comes in to contact with the children and families who in our community has a role to play. Everything that we do has the children at its centre. Their wellbeing, their safety, their achievement and their happiness underpins every decision we make. Often when safeguarding is mentioned, the immediate thought is about child protection – when a child is suffering harm, or is in danger of suffering harm. However, safeguarding is much more complex than this and encompasses a very wide range of areas. At St. Michael's we ensure that all of our staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and this training is regularly updated and frequently revisited throughout the year. We also ensure that our curriculum provides the children with age-appropriate opportunities to learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. With this in mind we will be sending out a termly newsletter informing you of any recent safeguarding updates as well as providing you with key information around a range of safeguarding issues.

Attendance

Attendance is a safeguarding priority for all schools. It is vital that parents ensure that we have at least TWO emergency contacts for every child and that all your contact details are up to date. We ask all parents to follow our absence procedures for planned and unplanned absences.

This can be found on our school website: [Attendance Leaflet](#)

Talk PANTS

Talk PANTS is a programme that helps children understand that their body belongs to them, and they should tell someone they trust if anything makes them feel upset or worried. We teach the children about PANTS and consent in school but we encourage all parents to continue these conversations at home. The NSPCC website is full of useful information to support parents in having these conversations.

Please follow the link below:

[NSPCC Talk PANTS](#)



In each newsletter we will share a 'Need to Know' guide for popular games/apps/sites. This will help parents/carers to understand more about these and how to keep the children safe online. This issue looks at supporting parents setting up apps, games and software.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

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'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnite rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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