

Oct 2024 Online Safety Update.



This month's Online Safety theme is 'Livestreaming'.

Livestreaming is when someone broadcasts video content, recorded in real-time (as it happens) to an audience online. Lots of people like livestreaming because – just like live TV – what you see is what you get, and there is no editing or filtering. For young people, they might like to see content livestreamed by their favourite social media influencers, musicians, makeup artists, or similar. This is because they might feel like they get to know the person, authentically.

'Watch Me Play' is a form of livestreaming often done by professional gamers – people who play video games for their job. Lots of young people like to watch these as they can see an expert playing their favourite game as it should be played, picking up hints and tips.

The risks with livestreaming are, of course, that anything can happen and it can be unpredictable. While the gamer is unlikely to use inappropriate language if they know they have child fans, they have no control over what others might say or post online as they game.

We know from research that female gamers are more likely to experience misogynistic comments and threats, including rape threats, so it could be distressing to see this happen in real-time.

It is important to be aware of the risks if your child likes to watch livestreamed events. We know that there have been several cases of people livestreaming their own suicide, self-harm, or even livestreaming murder and terrorist attacks. It can be difficult for your child to predict what they might be watching.

In order to keep your child safe, it might be a good idea to ensure your child only uses their device in your presence so you can monitor the content they are watching and step in if it seems to be concerning.

If your child does watch something that concerns them, follow up by talking to them about how the content made them feel. You may wish to report the content as inappropriate, which could lead to it being removed from social media.

As always, if you are worried about online safety issues affecting your child, you can always contact us for support. The pastoral team at The Meadows can be contacted on 0121 569 7089.