



## **Talking about the online world with your child can be difficult as they often feel that you don't understand.**

Please see below useful tips to help keep children safe on social media platforms.

### **What is WhatsApp?**

WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging apps in the world, with more than 1.5 billion people in more than 180 countries using it to send and receive text, photos, videos and documents, as well as make voice and video calls through an Internet or Wi-Fi connection.

### **What is Snapchat?**

Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images for a limited number of seconds, chat with users before messages disappear, and share images with their friends list through a 'story'.

### **What is Instagram?**

Instagram is a photo sharing app that allows users to share images and videos with the world. The app has a live streaming feature and additional add-ons, such as 'Boomerang', 'Hyperlapse' and 'Layout', which can be used to enhance their feed. Users can choose to add filters and make adjustments to their photos, such as brightness / contrast. To make their content more 'searchable', users can include hashtags in their uploads to make them easier to find.

### **What is TikTok?**

TikTok is a global video community where users create, share and discover 'funny and memorable moments' via short video clips – typically about 15 seconds long. Videos can be 'spiced up' with special effect filters, stickers, music and sound clips. Currently one of the world's most popular apps, TikTok was formerly known as Musical.ly, before it was rebranded by the Chinese company that acquired it in November 2017. If your child previously had a Musical.ly account, all of their videos and personal settings will have automatically been moved to TikTok.

## **What is YouTube?**

YouTube is a video sharing site/application that enables you to upload, view, rate, share and comment on a wide variety of videos. Consisting of a huge resource of information, advice and entertainment, YouTube now has 1.9 billion logged-in monthly users who watch a billion hours of video daily. Most of the content on Google-owned YouTube is uploaded by individuals, but organisations and media companies also offer some of their content via this platform.

## **What is Twitter?**

Twitter is a social networking site where users can post 'tweets' or short messages, photos and videos publicly. They can also share 'tweets' written by others to their followers. Twitter is popular with young people, as it allows them to interact with celebrities, stay up to date with news, trends and current social relevance.

## **What is Omegle?**

Omegle is a free online chat service which encourages users to either text or video chat with other users through their website. Individuals do not have to sign up nor register any details to use Omegle and the platform has very few content restrictions. Omegle's slogan is 'Talk to strangers!'. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Omegle is about and to raise their awareness around any potential safety concerns.

## **What is Fortnite?**

There's a very good chance you've heard of Fortnite, but what exactly is it? And why is it so popular amongst young people? Fortnite is an online multi-player "battle royale" game developed by Epic Games, and is playable on Playstation4, Xbox, Nintendo Switch, PC and Mobiles. It gained popularity in late 2007 and has since become the biggest game in the world, thanks to its rapid and engaging gameplay.

## **What is Among Us?**

Among Us is one of the most popular games of 2020. A space-themed 'social deduction game' where 4-10 players take on the guise of Crewmates, who must complete various tasks around their spaceship, while randomly selected Imposters must try their hardest to sabotage the others' efforts. The Imposters have to remain undetected through rounds of voting to win. While Among Us is a largely safe game, it's still prudent to be aware of any potential risks young ones might encounter when playing.

## What is Online Bullying?

Online bullying – also known as cyberbullying – is bullying that takes place ON THE INTERNET or via electronic devices and mobile phones. It can include: Sending someone mean or threatening emails, direct messages or text messages; Hacking into someone's online account; Being rude or mean to someone when playing online games; Posting private or embarrassing photos online or sending them to others; Creating fake social media accounts that mock someone or trick them; Excluding someone from an online conversation or blocking them for no reason.

## What is Sexting?

Sexting involves sending and receiving explicit messages, images or videos of a sexual nature. This content is usually uploaded on a mobile device, which can then be uploaded onto social networking sites and shared further. They can be sent to or from a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, or someone your child has met online. Sexting is often described as the new flirting for children – but it is illegal for anyone under the age of 18, with police forces in England and Wales recording 6,238 underage “sexting” offences in 2016-17, a rate of 17 a day.

## What is Grooming?

Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. They can do this both offline and online, with technology and the Internet being commonly used to initiate and facilitate contact with a child. Gaining victims' trust is a key part of engaging them in sexually explicit behaviour. The groomer, who can either be a stranger or someone a child already knows, tends to use tactics such as engaging in small talk or exchanging personal information with the child about hobbies and relationships, using flattery and gifts to build a rapport or even making threats and intimidation to gain control. This can take place over varying periods of time – from a few days to several years. It is illegal in the UK for an adult to send a sexual message to a child.

## What is Screen Addiction?

It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech – related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices.

(All content with thanks to [National Online Safety](#))