

Parents Online Safety Presentation 2022

Slide 1 - Title

Slide 2 - What are children doing online?

There are primarily four categories of what children are doing online. In the last three years, there has been a significant change in what children are doing online. Online gaming has increased in popularity and the number of children accessing online games. The risks of online gaming are the same as other areas of their online lives, however a child's attention when playing online games is on the game and not on protecting themselves. This may make children more vulnerable to people looking to harm or abuse them.

Explain to parents that the majority of online games allow children to communicate with others, this can be via a headset or as a text chat feature within the game. Talk to your children about the importance of the content of these conversations, which should never become personal (about their life).

Social Media continues to play a significant part in our children's lives and particularly over the last year and during the various lockdowns. Many children talk to their friends via technology. Are parents aware of which apps their children are using to communicate and the safety features of each of them? The importance of setting an example and being a positive role model should not be underestimated.

One of the key messages to try to communicate is that if there are parents there who have younger children or children that have not accessed any of these sites/ apps then to set parameters from the beginning rather than trying to wrestle back control. For example, this could be via limiting time on a device.

Slide 3 - Children's Digital Playground

Ask the parents to consider what their own playground would have looked like as a child and now compare it to our children's. All of the apps/ sites shown in this slide have their own threats to our children and children need to understand that any app or game that allows them to connect with other people is potentially a threat. Explain to parents that that is why we have to teach them appropriate behaviours for their online lives. If we can teach them how to behave safely online, then the app or game they are using doesn't necessarily matter as they will know how to behave whilst they use it.

Use the opportunity to discuss some of the lesser known apps shown on the slide. As the parents whether they could name all of the logos from the slide and for those they can identify can they explain the app to you? Some example apps parents may not be aware of -

Twitch - This is a gaming platform site and allows the children to watch other gamers playing games. Children do not play games on this site they watch others, some of the games may be inappropriate for children to view and lots of the language used on this site can be inappropriate.

Roblox - currently has more than 202 million active users so why wouldn't your child want to be involved?

Metaverse - this is a combination of VR worlds and platforms accessed via a browser.

Slide 4 - An Internet Minute

This slide shows the scale and number of sites that some children are using. Ask parents are there any sites on the wheel that they aren't aware of. We would also speak to the parents about the number of video sharing platforms with the ability to share videos on, such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok & YouTube. Sharing videos is now commonplace on almost all social media platforms.

Slide 5 - Media Use and Attitudes report 2022

This slide shows statistics taken from Ofcom's Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitude Reports 2022.

3-4s - This data shows the early access children have to technology and the breadth of content that children consume. Encourage parents to set parameters for use of technology from an early age - it is much more difficult to pull back control of access afterwards. Talk to them about ensuring children are using age appropriate apps such as YouTube kids and being weary of just giving access to the likes of TikTok where inappropriate content is widely accessible.

5 - 7s - Some of the figures on this slide are staggering, for example 38% of children play games online, are parents aware of the risks? On most games, children can talk to other players on the game (via in game text chat facility or via headsets), are parents aware their children can be talking to strangers when playing games? Further to the concerns regarding the scale of gaming in this age demographic, is the number of children using live streaming sites/ apps. This could be to both consumer content or creating it. If they are consuming it how can you be sure the content is appropriate? If they are creating it, are parents happy to allow them to live stream, what information are they sharing online and are they prepared for negative comments/ criticism of the content they are sharing?

Slide 6 - Media Use and Attitudes report 2022

8 - 11s - 69% play games online. Are parents understanding of the risks of playing online? Who are their children playing with? Who are they talking to when they are playing online? The data also shows that a third of children in this age range have seen something worrying or nasty. Ask the parents in attendance to think of the last time their child spoke to them about something they had seen online that was either worrying or nasty. If they haven't recently, then the chances are those children haven't spoken to anyone about the relevant content. We need to make sure children are aware they can speak to us about anything they see online.

12 - 15s - 71% have a social media account. The NSPCC highlighted this as a significant barrier to transition from primary to secondary. There is a pressure for children to join social media platforms from their peers. Advise parents to discuss this with their children, as with anything else in life they should not do something to conform with peer pressure. For those who are wanting to use it and are age appropriate, advise parents to talk to their child about the risks of posting online, who their friends are, who can see their profile and never to meet up with someone they've only met online.

Slide 7 - Tik Tots

This slide shows the extent to which children are accessing Tik Tok, this app has some significant risks to children and yet it is widely accessible to children.

Slide 8 - What can you do?

Ask the parents this question. What answers do they give? Highlight the positive answers. Explain that there is no correct answer to this question and that every parent and child is different and it will be what works for their particular relationship and circumstances. Explain that you will make some suggestions for how they can help.

Slide 9 - Acknowledge the Positives

As parents we need to acknowledge there is a positive side to our children's online lives, we need to make sure that we don't just focus on the negative sides to their online lives otherwise our children won't talk to us about concerns they have. At the point you allow your children access to online gaming/ Video Sharing Platforms/ Social Media you need to talk to them about the benefits and as they start using it, ask regularly what it is they like about it.

Slide 10 - Understand the world our children grow up in

Building on the previous slide we need develop empathy with our children and understand that our children are growing up in a different world to the one most parents did. There is peer pressure for our children to have a presence online, whether it is playing games, creating and sharing videos or commenting on social media. Parents need to understand this and listen to their children about their online experiences otherwise they will never understand the world our children are growing up in.

Slide 11 - Children will make mistakes....

We do need to acknowledge that our children will make mistakes and if they do make mistakes they can talk to us about them. The slide shows that our children are less likely to talk to their parents/ carers because they are concerned about what their response will be. We can avoid this by being upfront with our children and reassure them that they will not be punished for the mistakes they make online if they talk to us about them.

Slide 12 - Supporting Your Son or Daughter

Take an interest - you may not have heard of some of the apps/ games your children are playing or using but talk to them and ask them to show you how to play the games or use the apps they are interested in. As a parent you will look for things differently to your child and you can deal with any concerns you may have with them.

Engage with them - regular communication about technology with your children will mean children are more likely to talk to you if they have an issue online as they believe you are interested and able to help them.

Use technology with them - include them in your use of technology. Ask them for permission if you are sharing pictures of them, this will teach a positive habit. Take the lead and show them how YouTube works, show them how you write emails, post to your social media and make sure your profiles are positive so they copy your lead.

Do not become a sharent - we know that children copy adult behaviours so discuss with parents their responsibility as a role model when using their own social media and the amount of times their children see them accessing technology. Discuss with parents the need to teach good habits and it may be that if a parent wants to share an image then they ask their child's permission, this teaches them a positive behaviour and they may ask others before sharing images.

Slide 13 - Taming Gaming

This is a brilliant site for supporting parents to make informed choices about which games to allow their children to play. For any game a parent is unsure about, you can simply type the name of it into the Taming Gaming site and it will give you the PEGI rating and some of the risks associated with it. As good as this site is, we would also always recommend parents checking the site themselves beforehand and then sitting with their child while they play.

Slide 14 - Test your home filtering

Many parents do not apply home filtering that is freely available to them with their home broadband. Encourage parents to run this test on their personal devices to minimise the risk of children seeing inappropriate content.

Slide 15 - Lego

Lego have produced some resources that as a parent you can sit down and use with your children and because it is Lego, it engages the children. The slide shows you three options.

Slide 16 - Parental Controls

Explain as a school that you provide parents with a guide for applying parental controls.

Slide 17 - Google Family Link

There are settings that allow parents to monitor and limit their children's use (this is the Google solution for Android devices). For more information, invite questions and signpost them to the parental controls guide we issue.

Slide 18 - iOS Parental Controls

As above but for Apple devices.

Slide 19 - Who can help?

Signposting to some useful services.