



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

Termly Computing Online Safety Newsletter

Online Safety Newsletter Summer 2023

Need advice or help?

All social media platforms have their own ways of reporting inappropriate content or users. In addition, the following organisations can help you:

NSPCC:

If you are worried about a child then NSPCC can offer advice and support and inform you of the necessary steps to take: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/>

Childline:

Children can contact Childline to chat to somebody about their worries: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>

UK Safer Internet Centre:

Report Harmful Content is a national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>

CEOP:

If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with your child online then CEOP can help: <https://www.ceop.police.uk/SafetyCentre/>



What parents need to know about

OMEGLE

NO AGE VERIFICATION MEASURES

Omegle is completely free to use and allows users to communicate with others without the need to register, supply an email address or create a profile. This means users can remain anonymous and it's hard to trust who your children are talking to. Furthermore, there are no age verification measures and other than agreeing to the terms and conditions, your child can easily start online engagement with strangers and potentially access more adult themed content.



RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Omegle chat picks another user at random and there is very little way of verifying who your child may be chatting to. This can lead to a number of risks including catfishing (users pretending to be of similar age), identity theft (users eliciting information to commit fraud) and sexual/psychological grooming (users coercing others to act in a way or do something they wouldn't normally do).



UNMODERATED CHAT

Omegle encourages video chat as much as it can, prompting users during their text chat to activate their web cam. Whilst text chat has a degree of moderation, the content in Omegle's video chat rooms is not moderated by administrators and, at any time of the day, there can be thousands of users online. This means that your child could easily come across illegal, unacceptable or inappropriate images or media. Omegle currently offers no function for reporting online abuse or inappropriate behaviour on its site and instead only offers advice to 'please be careful'. It also advises to 'Use Omegle at your own peril. Disconnect if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable.'



Live streaming Introduction

What is live streaming?

Live streaming is when somebody broadcasts live (real time) video through an app or website. For example, users can live stream on Instagram, Twitch or Facebook. Children also post pre-recorded videos and share them through apps such as YouTube or share them to friends via apps such as WhatsApp. Whilst live streaming, other users can comment, react and chat. Most of these apps are for those aged over 13+.

Risks

- If your child has a public profile then potentially people they don't know will be watching their videos, commenting and chatting with them.
- Whilst using these apps/sites, your child could view inappropriate content.
- Your child may share personal information.
- Videos can be recorded or screenshots taken so even if you subsequently delete the video then somebody may still have a copy of it to share.
- Your child could be subjected to cyberbullying.
- Your child may participate in online challenges which can sometimes be risky.

How can I help keep my child safe?

Use apps/websites together so you can work out how the privacy settings work and how to report or block other users when necessary. Ensure your child understands that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if they see anything upsetting online. Talk to your child about how to deal with peer pressure and how they shouldn't share or participate in anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Further links

The following three articles will provide you with further information and guidance on how to keep your child safe:

- <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/parents-guide-to-live-streaming-and-vlogging/>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/livestreaming-online-video-apps/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/what-is-live-streaming/>

Set up appropriate privacy settings

Don't share personal info

Have regular chats with your child

Learn how to use the reporting functions

Dove Self Esteem

Dove has a whole host of articles, videos and activities on their website as part of their self-esteem project, the aim of which is to boost the self-esteem of young people. The free resources are designed to help you communicate with your child on a variety of subjects including the effects of social media on their lives.

<https://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html>

Video Calling Family

There are lots of different apps available to video chat with others – something that has become part of all our lives in recent years. This helpful article from Internet Matters outlines how to use some of the more popular platforms as well as some tips on how to use them safely including setting boundaries on when and where children can use these apps to chat with others.



The full article is available here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/parent-stories/how-to-use-video-chat-platforms-to-group-chat-with-family-and-friends/>

Media use and attitudes report 2023

This report from Ofcom looks at media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 3-17. The report shows what children and young people are doing online. It provides an interesting read to help our understanding in how we can support our children and young people further. <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2023>