

Dear parents,

At Edleston we teach children the importance of being safe online and what to do and not to do. We use sites such as the <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> site which has different activities for children from 5-18yrs old. Children in class are great and can tell you how to be safe but we are finding that more and more often the children are not following these rules themselves, as they believe it won't happen to them.

As the internet is forever changing there are often many apps and sites out there that we, as adults, don't know about, until the children tell us.

Each term I will create a newsletter with the most current information I can find and share with you as parents. Hopefully you can talk through these with your child to ensure they are safe when they are online, either on the computer, Ipad or phone.

There are many sites to help parents such as <https://parentzone.org.uk/> and we are linking up to the sister site, www.parentinfo.org.uk, which will link up with current information updates on our school website. Please spend a few minutes having a look through as there are many useful tips and guides available.

I have attached a brief guide to the top 6 apps and the dangers of each.

Furthermore, we will be having a workshop on the 6th November at 2:15pm in the hall, for all those parents who would like to know more and hopefully show you some of the ways to keep safe online. It is not just the children who need to keep details safe! Free tea and biscuits will be available.

In the meantime if you have any questions or worries please speak to your class teacher or Mrs Oliver (Y6) and we will be happy to help.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Oliver

(Computing lead)

The 6 apps and services that every parent should know about:



It's impossible to keep up with all the apps and services children use online but here's Parent Info's guide to some of the most popular. By Eleanor Levy.

Snapchat

The photo messaging app allows users to take and share photos and videos, adding text and silly graphics to people listed in their smartphone's contact list who also have the app.

When Snapchat launched, its success came from the ethereal nature of the 'Snaps' – they lasted only a few seconds before disappearing and couldn't be saved by the person receiving them. This meant children could have fun, pulling silly faces and not worrying that the image would be around forever.

As Snapchat has evolved, this has changed. The person posting can now choose how long the images are available by creating Stories, which are available for up to 24 hours. Images can also be screen shot outside the app and shared by the person receiving them.

Snapchat is unmoderated and therefore, you cannot filter the posts your child receives or Stories they view, which means they can be exposed to adult content.

Instagram

Like Facebook, lots of parents use Instagram and so are more aware of how the app works than some of the others on this list.

Instagram allows its users to share images and videos with each other. It has recently introduced live streaming.

Users can comment on posts, which can lead to both positive and negative judgements.

Posts can be seen by anyone as default, but you can change your child's privacy settings so that only people they know can see them. However, their bio, profile and profile image will remain public.

Instagram has been accused of contributing to the rise in body image issues among young people. Celebrities post images that have been heavily edited, professionally styled and often retouched, giving an idea of beauty that is both unreal and

unattainable for most people, while young people themselves can obsess over taking the perfect selfie.

Musical.ly

Musical.ly lets you make and share music videos and its popularity has surged among children and young people, spawning its own young stars, rather in the manner of how YouTube launched the likes of Zoella and Alfie Deyes.

Users pick a song from within the app and dance or sing along, enhancing their videos with editing effects. They can then share their video or keep it private.

Because Musical.ly is an unmoderated live streaming app, parents should be aware that users can be viewed and contacted by others, including people they don't know. There have been reports of requests for images of a sexual nature from strangers commenting on children's videos.

Users can report abuse by tapping on the three dots icon (...) within the app and following the instructions. To block, go to the user's profile, click the three dots icon in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

YouTube

Children and young people love YouTube. Some just like watching the clips – anything from Taylor Swift performances to cute cat videos to YouTubers like football gaming star KSI – while others make their own and post them for others to watch and comment on.

YouTube has simple parental controls to restrict access to adult content, strict community rules about posts and an easy process to report illegal, harmful or upsetting content. But there is still a chance your child will come across content you wouldn't want them to, including religious and extremist propaganda. That's why it's important to encourage them to think critically about anything they see on the platform. The content may not be true or have come from a verifiable source.

To post, you need to be 13 years old and open an account but you can watch content at any age. For children under 13, there is an app, YouTube Kids, with content specially curated for that age group.

Skype

Live streaming services like Skype allow users to broadcast in real time with no moderation.

Lots of families happily use Skype – it's a really useful app that can help people stay in touch with friends and relatives who live a long way away, or when parents are separated.

However, live streaming services do have inherent risks because they're unmoderated.

They can be used by people to communicate with children privately, which can be particularly worrying if your child uses them to talk to strangers online.

One of the problems for parents is that your child might not think their online friend is a stranger at all, so could be persuaded to do things they wouldn't normally, such as sharing sexual images, or become interested in extremist political or religious views.

Skype doesn't offer a facility to record conversations, but people could record them with a separate device or programme, and then share images without your child knowing.

Warn them of the dangers of using live streaming sites, and advise them that, if they do, they shouldn't give away anything that will identify their full name, where they live, like to hang out, or go to school when using these sites to talk to people they do not know in real life.

As with all sites and apps they use, teach them how to block and report, and make sure they have a trusted adult to confide in should something go wrong.

WhatsApp

Another app parents are increasingly aware of because they use it themselves, WhatsApp allows groups of users to have a running conversation. It's good fun and can save a lot of time when organising activities – or even what the family is having for tea.

Children and young people use it to share images, organise homework and generally chat with their friends and they can communicate with anyone in their contacts list who has the app. It's aimed at 13+ (the age you could sign up came down from 16 after it was bought by Facebook, bringing it in line with its parent company's terms and conditions.)

There have been reports of bullying and inappropriate contact from adults on the app. It's unmoderated so young users will need to know how to block upsetting or illegal contact and report users within the app themselves.