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Knowsley City Learning Centres

Online Safety Newsletter February 2026

Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide

The BBC have published an article with an expert in parenting and child development, Dr Martha Deiros Collado. It includes tips and advice to help you in supporting your child online.

The article explores nine ways in which you can help your child to develop their media literacy skills, for example how to encourage your child to challenge what they see online and how to start conversations using real life examples, as well as how to develop healthy screen time habits.

At the end of the article, there are links to further articles that may be of interest to you, such as how to manage your child's online world without clashing.

You can find out more here:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwb3tcw

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/february-2026-secondary/

Using AI to alter images

AI image generator and moderator tools are widely available and often used by children. Whilst these tools can be used for creative purposes, we need to ensure our children are aware of the appropriate way in which to use them and the circumstances when they should not be used, even if harm is not intended.

What are AI image generator and moderator tools?

It is when Artificial Intelligence is used to create or modify images, for example it could be used to swap faces, change expressions or for more sinister reasons, such as to remove clothes. These images are often very realistic and therefore difficult to see that they are fake.

Privacy concerns and consent

If your child is using these tools, they need to be aware of potential loss of privacy and the importance of consent. They should know that they should only use images of other people with consent.

What does my child need to know about using these tools?

- Children shouldn't use AI tools to manipulate images of school staff. Even if the child's intention is not malicious, children should not use AI tools to create or edit photos of teachers under any circumstances.
- Manipulation of images of friends or other children – if you are using images of other people, then consent **must** always be sought.
- The tools should not be used to create images that can embarrass or hurt others - this is a form of online bullying.
- Copyright issues – who owns the copyright? These images could be reused by others, which can affect their own digital footprint.

What should I do?

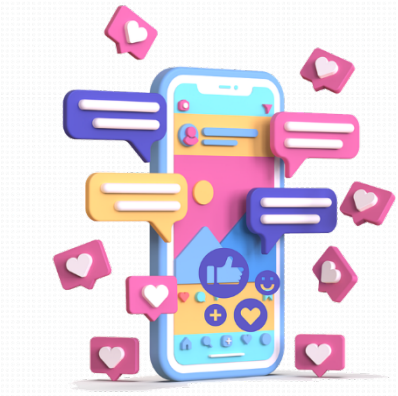
- Chat to your child if they are using these tools and ascertain the reason why. Ask them to show you the images that they have created.
- Check the age ratings of any apps/websites that your child is using and set up appropriate parental controls.
- Develop your child's digital literacy by teaching them to recognise online risks and to behave responsibly online

Further information

- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-to-children-about-ai
- https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2025/02/18/understanding-image-consent-at-schools/

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok. TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. If your child is using TikTok then make sure appropriate security / privacy settings are applied.



Account set up

It is important that your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., Direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15. In addition, advertisements are tailored by age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private. You can read more about the other settings available, such as switching off comments and restricted mode here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/privacy-and-safety-settings-for-users-under-age-18

Family Pairing

Family Pairing allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode or tailor your child's 'For You' feed by selecting keywords that TikTok will use to filter out posts. You can find out more here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/account-and-user-safety/family-pairing

What do I need to be aware of?

- **Inappropriate content and themes:** whilst against guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. Some of the songs available to lip sync to may contain inappropriate lyrics/themes.
- **Challenges:** We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be **risky/dangerous**. Sadly, there are reports that children have died whilst attempting online challenges. Children may not yet have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse that what they see online is not always safe for them to replicate.
- **Stranger contact:** chat to your child about how people may not be who they say they are when online.

Refresh your feed

You can refresh your "For You" feed to update the content recommended: https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/refresh-your-for-you-feed

Blocking and Reporting

Show your child how to use the safety features available.

Further information

- https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok
- https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide

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Balance screen time tips

Internet Matters have created simple tips to help you develop healthy online habits for your child. They also answer key questions such as "how much screentime is too much" and "is gaming bad for children." Access this information here:

https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/creating-a-balanced-digital-diet-with-screen-time-tips

7 Steps to Good Digital Parenting

The Family Online Safety Institute have created seven steps to assist you as a digital parent. Find out more here:

https://fosi.org/program/7-steps-to-good-digital-parenting/

Children's Commissioner launches new guide for parents and carers

The Children's Commissioner has released a new guide to help you in managing your child's digital life. The guide was written with direct involvement from children.

It includes advice on setting boundaries such as no devices in the bedroom and how to chat to your child. You can find the guide here:

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/what-i-wish-my-parents-or-carers-knew-childrens-commissioner-launches-guide-for-parents-and-carers-on-managing-childrens-digital-lives/