



Thornton Primary School



Spring 2026 Online Safety Newsletter

This term we marked **Internet Safety Day**, an important opportunity for schools, families, and communities to come together to promote the safe and responsible use of technology. As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding and supporting our pupils, we are pleased to introduce the very first edition of our **Online Safety Newsletter**.

The online world is constantly evolving. New apps, games, trends, and digital platforms are emerging all the time, and while these spaces offer exciting opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection, they can also present risks. As part of our safeguarding policy, we believe it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children are protected, informed, and empowered online.

This newsletter will be a regular update designed to:

- Keep you informed about changes and developments in the digital world
 - Highlight popular apps, games, and online trends
- Share practical advice on privacy settings, parental controls, and online safety tools
 - Provide guidance on how to talk to your child about their online experiences
- Offer support around issues such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, online gaming, and social media use

By staying informed and maintaining open conversations at home, we can work together to help children develop the skills they need to navigate the internet safely and confidently.

We look forward to supporting you through this newsletter and continuing our shared commitment to keeping children safe online.

Mrs Ayub

CBeebies Parenting and Apps

CBeebies Parenting is full of useful information from creative activities, recipes and information about the CBeebies apps. CBeebies apps are free to download with no in-app purchases.

Their apps include:

- Playtime Island - Fun Games for Kids App. This app includes 40 free games.
- CBeebies Learn - Early Years Learning App. This app includes games and videos and is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Get Creative - Open-ended Creative Activities App. This app is free and includes lots of drawing and painting activities.
- Storytime - Reading Stories App. This app includes interactive story books.

You can find out more here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting>



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 is available on these websites listed below

[Talking to children about AI | NSPCC](#)

[Is Your Child's Photo Safe? Understanding Image Consent at Schools and Preventing AI Image Exploitation - Safer Schools](#)

Family Smart Start

Family Smart Start Family Smart Start is a free toolkit designed to help you and your child navigate the milestone of getting their first phone. The toolkit provides support on how to set up their new phone, how to talk to your child about digital safety and a template family agreement.

Find out more here:

<https://familysmartstart.com>



Snapchat

Snapchat is a popular social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up.

Users can send messages (snaps) to others that are only seen for a set time, and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours.

Key Concerns

There are potential risks such as:

- the risk of your child viewing content that is not appropriate for their age.
- location sharing (via Snap Map).
- cyberbullying.
- contact from strangers.
- excessive screen time – children may have a fear of missing out (FOMO) as well as pressure to maintain “streaks”.
- “disappearing” messages can lead to more risky behaviour and a “false sense of security.” These messages could be screenshot or another device used to take a photo, so they're not actually deleted as the sender believes. The image could then be shared.

Parental Controls / Safety settings

Snapchat's Family Centre is a set of parental controls and includes tools such as allowing you to:

- see who your child is friends with.
- see who your child has sent messages (not the contents of conversations though), photos or videos to in the last week.
- view a list of group members for groups that your child has been active in.
- restrict content to limit access.
- report any accounts that you are concerned about.

You can learn more about Family Centre here: <https://parents.snapchat.com/parental-controls?lang=en-GB>

If your child is using Snapchat, then make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up, including who can see their location and who can contact them.

Also ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary:

<https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7012343074580>

For more detailed advice and information:

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/snapchat>
- <https://parents.snapchat.com/safeguards-for-teens>



Playing Games Online

Does your child play games online? We have outlined some risks that you should consider:

Chatting to strangers / risk of inappropriate language

Some games will allow communication via text chat, direct messages or chatting. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off and/or the option to restrict bad language, so make sure settings appropriate to your child are applied. If your child is playing online with strangers, then you need to be aware that there is a risk of grooming. Some games do allow you to restrict communication to 'friends only,' however you would need to monitor that their online friends are real life friends. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players.

Cyberbullying

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they would not if they were face to face. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect. Other forms of cyberbullying whilst playing games could be excluding others, criticising the ability of other players and ganging up on others.

In app purchases

Many games include the option to purchase additional items/ subscriptions so ensure you do not have payment cards saved or set up restrictions/ a password to approve purchases.

What can I do?

- Set up parental controls - as well as setting up appropriate parental controls through the game's settings, ensure you have set them up on the console/device your child is playing on.
- Check age ratings - before buying the game, check that your child is old enough to play it. All games will either have a PEGI rating or be rated by the App Store/Google Play.
- Chat to your child regularly about the risks above so that they are aware of what can happen online and remind them to always talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns

Further Information

CEOP provides further guidance and support regarding this topic:

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>

