

# West Acton Primary School Newsletter



Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022

What perfect weather we had at the end of this week – or in Year 2s case what perfect weather for a day at the beach! The long coach journey was well worth it and there is a rumour we brought back more sand than was left at West Wittering! Year 5 also had a nautical day visiting the Golden Hinde. The work that goes into planning trips and the organisation on the day is tremendous and our staff work incredibly hard on this – we really appreciate our parent helpers too.

We really need to see an improvement in some children's punctuality – why not try leaving home 10 minutes earlier? You might even miss the traffic too. Our children love learning and want to be in school ready for the start of their lessons.

Well done to the Year 1s, and Year 2s, who completed the Government Phonics Screening Test this week – all the hard work of pupils, staff and parents really shone through!

Have a lovely week end, Miss Kondo

The PTA are organising a 2nd-hand uniform sale on Thursday 16th June:  
we need your help!

We need volunteers to collect uniform donations and to help with the sale.

If you would like to volunteer you can add your name to the rota  
online: <https://signup.com/go/BkDHLBL>

If you have any questions please do get in touch by email  
at [fowap2014@gmail.com](mailto:fowap2014@gmail.com)



# SUMMER TERM DATES

Summer Term 2022	
Start of Term for pupils	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 PUPILS RETURN TO SCHOOL
SCHOOL CLOSED	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2022 May Day Bank holiday Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022 Holiday in Lieu of Queen's Jubilee
SCHOOL CLOSED HALF TERM	Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 to Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2022
SCHOOL CLOSED	INSET DAY for staff training – Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
End of Term	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2022- SCHOOL CLOSES at 1.30pm
SCHOOL CLOSED	INSET DAY for staff training – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2022
SCHOOL CLOSED Summer Holiday	Occasional Days - Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> , Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2022

We are delighted to be able to have our class assemblies again.

We hope that parents/carers of the performing class can join us at 9.00am in the Jubilee Hall.

We will confirm on a week by week basis.

## Summer Term

Class	Date
Sycamore	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> May
Pine	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> May
Rowan	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> May
Holly	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> May
Ivy	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> June
Olive	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> June
Fir	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> June
Banyan	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> July

*This morning, Ivy class shared their learning from History. After much hard work and collaboration, they taught the audience about Pandora's Box and the importance of the gift of hope. They had a brilliant songs and actions which brought their assembly alive.*

*Thank you Ivy class, we learnt a lot from you!*

## This week's top tip from Mrs Ahmad- West Acton School Therapist

I am here at West Acton on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays this year.

### **Building your bond through PLAY!**

Just like we adults like to chat, children's language is play. You can learn so much about their feelings, their wishes, their worries and who they are by watching them play. It is a wonderful way for them to release their emotions in a safe and positive way. We also know that a strong connection between child and adult means less difficult behaviours. Playing with your child is a great way to connect with them! Your lives can get very busy but all you need are regular pockets of fun, being fully present (screens away!) and letting your child lead the game. Show interest in what they enjoy and show them how delighted you are to be spending this time with them!

### ***What can parents enjoy joining in with ...***

**Hide and seek** – this game encourages counting, thinking cleverly and turn-taking, all skills your children are learning. It also provides the opportunity for your child to experience being found by you and seeing the delight in your face.

**Squiggle** – Take turns to draw a squiggle and the other person has to turn it into a picture. It doesn't have to look like anything specific, just something to share.

**Guess the Letter** - With your finger trace a letter on your child's back and help them guess what it is. Swap turns. This is great at bedtime.

**Remote Control Robot** – Have your child draw a remote control with 3-5 buttons/commands. They can make you go forwards, backwards, sideways, spin around, crawl, stop, etc. The funnier you are, the better (make robot noises!). Then you can swap around if they want to. Your children will enjoy watching you being a bit 'silly' and playful with them.

House points for this week are –

Chiswick	1031
Osterley	1038
Pitzhanger	997
Syon	1033

## West Acton Primary School Weekly Values Rewards



<b>Wc 23.5.2022</b>	<b>Courage</b>	<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
<b>Acorn</b>	Konoko	Robsan	Wataru
<b>Banyan</b>	Tatsuki	Yu	Titan
<b>Fir</b>	Ren	Zain	Laden
<b>Olive</b>	Mikheal	Khayria	Lana
<b>Ash</b>	Safaa	Hadi	Halla
<b>Guava</b>	Kevin	Akito	Abdullah
<b>Katsura</b>	Teddy	Arber	Mohamed B
<b>Chestnut</b>	Sarah	Hari	Elena
<b>Damson</b>	Hameed	Prajay	Ali K
<b>Juniper</b>	Abdallah	Miuro	Stavros
<b>Holly</b>	Nico	Maryam	Maho
<b>Ivy</b>	Tate	Luca	Rayan
<b>Rowan</b>	Miyu	Kiko	Muhamed
<b>Mulberry</b>	Ali	Zaynab	Joud
<b>Pine</b>	Obid	Tomoki	Yuno
<b>Sycamore</b>	Nadia	Maryam	Tahir
<b>Elder</b>	Fayyad	Otis	Arnet
<b>Quince</b>	Luis	Nadine	Phong
<b>Willow</b>	So	Sofia	Kazuki
<b>Lime</b>	Yusei	Ruweyda	Aya
<b>Tamarind</b>	Ahmed	Valentina	Leona
<b>Zaytouna</b>	Maki	Remi	Rinoha
<b>Woodlands</b>	Yusuf	Oliver M	Adam

Year 6 had a fantastic time before half term preparing their own healthy wraps and Jubilee biscuits. We learned the different ways to cut and prepare vegetables and even got to take home the recipe cards so that we can re-create our food at home. Better still, parents even came in to taste the creations!



*Following on from Year 6's charity readathon fundraiser in Spring term, in which we raised a whopping £443.26, we have been awarded £88 pounds in book vouchers. A huge congratulation to Year 6 pupils for their commitment – your love of reading really shone through! Special thanks to Illy (Lime Class) and Erin (Tamarind Class), who were presented with £5 book vouchers for their fantastic fundraising efforts.*

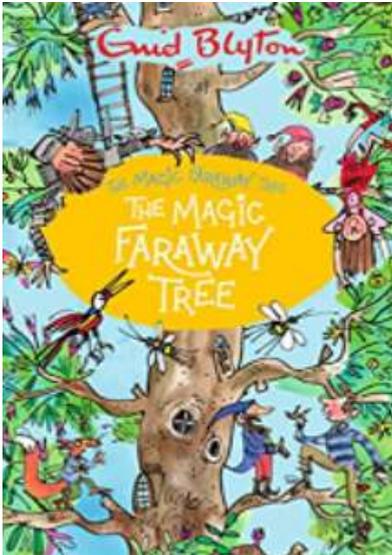


## **Match Time!**

*On Monday in the last week of Summer 1 term, our Year 5/6 boys football team played their first match this year against Holy Family school. This followed only two training sessions. It was a hard fought game and we did very well to match Holy Family in the first half, trailing 1-0 at half-time. Holy Family have been training all year and the difference showed in the second half when they scored a number of goals. Nevertheless, our team showed lots of courage competing against them and it was excellent preparation for our next matches after half-term. Well done to Dixon, Hamza, Taishi and Yuri in particular for solid performances!*



## Staff Book Reviews – why not read these with your child?



### My Favourite Characters



Moon-Face, Silky the fairy and Saucepan Man.

I love reading and my all-time favourite book is **The Magic Faraway Tree by the famous children's writer, Enid Blyton**. She wrote many popular series including the Famous Five, Malory Towers and The Secret Seven.

The story takes place in an enchanting forest in which a gigantic magical tree grows-the enormous "Faraway Tree". The tree is so tall that its top branches reach into the clouds and is wide enough to contain small houses carved into its trunk. Three children Joe, Beth and Frannie discover the tree in the enchanting forest, which is the beginning of many magical adventures. They meet lots of new friends like Moon-Face, who has a slippery slide in his house and Saucepan Man, who wears saucepans over his body and is really funny. The children get to visit lots of different lands like Topsy-Turvy Land and Do-as-you-please land. The book is exciting and full of magic.

I think the book is a brilliant book for creating imagination of all the different lands and provides escapism from real life in its fantasy world. It is a magical enchanting book and provokes the imagination in the use of language and description. I recommend Year 2, 3, and year 4 to read this book. If you like adventure explore this most magical of all fantasy book full of elves, pixies and wonderful characters.

*Review by Mrs Chohan*

## Lost Homework by Richard O' Neil

Richard O'Neill was the chosen author for World Book Day for Year One. He is of Traveller heritage and a great storyteller.

The story is about Sonny, who loves doing his homework on a Friday, so he can enjoy the rest of the weekend. However, this particular Friday is very busy as he helps his family and his Traveller community with a variety of things throughout the weekend, such as getting ready for his cousin's wedding, calculating the route with his dad, helping to restore an old vardo (traditional horse drawn carriage), sending an email for a neighbour, cooking food, sewing, and more. He is so busy that he only remembers his homework on the Sunday. However, he cannot find it. His teacher is given a note of how busy he has been and he tells his class all about it. She tells him that he has covered lots of subjects, e.g. Maths with his dad, D.T. with restoration, Food Tech with cooking.

I like this book because it shows that we are learning all the time with the things we do, sometimes without realising it. I like that the author has included a small glossary for us to understand some Traveller terminology, e.g. Kushti means Good Also, it covers some of our West Acton Values, like Courage, when Sonny got up in front of everyone at the wedding to tell a story, as he was quite nervous.



Review by Mrs Williams

## Reception Trip to the National Gallery



The children had a workshop about St George. They began with an introduction by looking at a painting; the guide explained that the story they were going to hear involved a man on a horse, a dragon and a princess.

The children were told to look around the gallery to see if they could find a painting that had a dragon in it and with some support they soon found the painting and after this they took part in a drama story about George and the dragon. The children enjoyed asking questions and making comments. They were also confident to take part in acting out the roles of the characters in the story.

To conclude, the children were informed about the importance of the story and how it was connected to Britain.

# Walk to School Week & International Day of Families

In a combined celebration of Walk to School Week and International Day of Families, pupils dressed up in clothing from another country and travelled to school in an active way. Thank you to all pupils and families who took part. At West Acton we are working towards creating cleaner air for all our families and local community.



<b>West Acton Primary School Weekly Attendance &amp; Punctuality</b>				
<b>W/E:</b>		<b>10th June 2022</b>		
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>95.00%</b>		<b>Punctuality</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>School Target:</b>	<b>96.30%</b>		<b>Class Targets:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Class</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Attendance Winner</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>No.Lates</b>
		<b>EYFS</b>		
<b>Acorn</b>	<b>98.90%</b>	<b>Acorn</b>	<b>Acorn</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Reception</b>			<b>Reception</b>	
<b>Olive</b>	<b>92.50%</b>	<b>Punctuality Winner</b>	<b>Olive</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Banyan</b>	<b>94.40%</b>	<b>Olive</b>	<b>Banyan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Fir</b>	<b>90.40%</b>		<b>Fir</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Key Stage 1</b>		<b>Year 1, 2, 3 &amp; ELM</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	
<b>Katsura</b>	<b>90.80%</b>	<b>Attendance Winner:</b>	<b>Katsura</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ash</b>	<b>93.30%</b>	<b>ELM</b>	<b>Ash</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Guava</b>	<b>92.60%</b>		<b>Guava</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Damson</b>	<b>98.70%</b>	<b>Punctuality Winner</b>	<b>Damson</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chestnut</b>	<b>93.50%</b>	<b>Damson</b>	<b>Chestnut</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Juniper</b>	<b>97.00%</b>		<b>Juniper</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key Stage 2</b>			<b>Key Stage 2</b>	
<b>Holly</b>	<b>98.50%</b>		<b>Holly</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Rowan</b>	<b>93.30%</b>	<b>Year 4, 5, 6 &amp; BIRCH</b>	<b>Rowan</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ivy</b>	<b>92.30%</b>	<b>Attendance Winner:</b>	<b>Ivy</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mulberry</b>	<b>96.10%</b>	<b>Quince</b>	<b>Mulberry</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pine</b>	<b>96.30%</b>		<b>Pine</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Sycamore</b>	<b>92.70%</b>	<b>Punctuality Winner</b>	<b>Sycamore</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Willow</b>	<b>98.40%</b>	<b>Elder</b>	<b>Willow</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Elder</b>	<b>97.20%</b>		<b>Elder</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Quince</b>	<b>99.10%</b>		<b>Quince</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Lime</b>	<b>92.90%</b>		<b>Lime</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tamarind</b>	<b>95.00%</b>		<b>Tamarind</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Zaytouna</b>	<b>95.70%</b>		<b>Zaytouna</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Woodlands</b>			<b>Woodlands</b>	
<b>Elm</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>Elm</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Birch</b>	<b>93.80%</b>		<b>Birch</b>	<b>6</b>



The effect of absence on progress					
A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.					
No Absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80.00%
Very Good		Worrying		Serious Concern	



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HORROR GAMES

Horror video games come in such a variety that the genre can be hard to define. The overlapping element is that these games are designed to scare or unsettle the player through gameplay, atmosphere, story, music, setting and 'jump scares'. The most common sub-genres are survival horror, action horror, psychological horror, jump-scare horror and reverse horror. These games originate from a range of developers, including smaller indie studios which release download-only titles (that is, they aren't physically sold in shops) and therefore aren't subject to age ratings.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### ADULT THEMES

Horror games are typically made with adults in mind, which means by definition that they often feature adult themes. *Outlast*, for instance, is a popular horror game series including material such as nudity and extreme sadistic violence. Other games, like *Five Nights at Freddy's* and its sequels, have a back-story that doesn't actually appear on screen but still hints at explicit adult themes.

### VIOLENT CONTENT

Not all horror games contain graphic violence (titles like *Five Nights at Freddy's* and *Phasmophobia* prefer a spookier, suspenseful aesthetic) but many do portray extreme brutality very realistically. Until *Down* and the hugely popular *Resident Evil* and *Outlast* franchises, for instance, feature incredibly graphic violence. The safest course of action is to thoroughly research a game in advance.

### ONLINE INTERACTION

Some horror games are played cooperatively with others online. *Phasmophobia* is one of the most popular titles in this category, and while it doesn't feature an excessive amount of gore, it does place a strong emphasis on online interactions – often with strangers. *Dead by Daylight* is another game in which frequent and prolonged online communication with other players is an advantage.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL HORROR

Rather than simply loading on the blood and gore, psychological horror games try to scare the player through subtle, mental and emotional means. For this reason, this type of game (notable examples include *Alien: Isolation*, *The Medium* and the *Amnesia* series) can have a longer-lasting effect on players: some occasionally 'break the fourth wall' – interacting directly with the player as if they were real.

### LONG-TERM FEAR FACTOR

Horror games are designed to be scary; most players accept this fact in advance. They can, however, include content which leaves an unwanted lasting impression. By focusing on our fears and concerns to elicit an emotional reaction, horror games can be triggering in unexpected ways for some players. It's difficult to predict when – and how – a game might have long-term effects on an individual's mental wellbeing.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### BEWARE OF JUMP SCARES

Jump scares in video games are often no worse than they are in movies. If a young person doesn't cope well with being suddenly startled by something in a film or on TV, they probably won't be able to handle horror games featuring jump scares. Some games (such as *Five Nights at Freddy's*) are built entirely around this technique and aren't suitable for younger children or those who are easily frightened.

### RESEARCH THE GAME

It's best to look into a horror game thoroughly if your child expresses an interest in playing it. Many indie horror titles are download-only and therefore aren't required to come with an age rating – so you'll need to do some background reading and judge the game's content for yourself. Check out the game's web pages, read any wikis about it (including fan ones) and watch videos of the gameplay.

### ENCOURAGE BREAKS

It's easy to lose track of time when gaming, and horror games are no exception. A short break every hour or so is important to rest the eyes and relieve the posture – especially in traumatic situations in the game have built up tension and stress. For horror gamers, breaks also give the added benefit of feeling more relaxed afterwards, which can mean a scarier gaming session when they resume!

### IF IN DOUBT, SWAP IT OUT

If your child finds a horror game to play, but after doing some research you decide it doesn't look like the right one for them, swap it out! There are a lot of horror titles to choose from, and some will be more appropriate than others. Work together with your child to find a suitable game for them. Remember, horror games don't have to be gore-spattered and graphic to be enjoyably scary!

### STAY RECEPTIVE

Maintaining good communication with your child is vital for safe gaming. If they see something in a horror game that disturbs them in ways they didn't expect, then they should feel comfortable opening up to you about it. Try not to simply laugh it off or make light of it, and always make time to listen. It's a useful reminder that they can talk to you about any type of problem they have in the future.

### Meet Our Expert

Clare Dodson (aka, @claredodson) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of *Lunatic Gaming* and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



National  
Online  
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
13+

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

18

CENSORED

## EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

W&#\*!

## TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be 'the next big thing' will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



## HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

## ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media, TikTok is designed to be addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next mean it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

## IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase 'TikTok coins', which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 99p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

### MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts to 'private', keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'Stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

### LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something does slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

### USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

### MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# NETFLIX

Netflix is a subscription-based streaming service that allows users to watch TV shows and movies on any internet-enabled device that supports the software, such as smart TVs, phones and tablets. The pandemic saw a surge in children consuming on-demand content as many families relaxed their screen-time rules. Netflix's diverse range of programming caters for all age groups – so it's important for parents to recognise the potential risks of children using the service and the measures to help their child enjoy a safe streaming experience.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Netflix produces and curates an extensive catalogue of content that can provide hours of entertainment. If they share the same user account as an adult, this can potentially lead to children accidentally viewing all manner of inappropriate content, including nudity, profanity and extreme violence. This can happen easily on shared accounts, as Netflix cannot establish who's watching.

## BINGE-WATCHING

Netflix allows users to view shows and movies quickly and easily without adverts or interruptions, making excessive screen time a concern. Binge-watching has become more common during the pandemic, due to Netflix's regularly updated content and algorithms which recommend content very similar to what's previously been enjoyed. Marathon viewing sessions can lead to children staying up too late, affecting their mood and concentration the next day.

## SCREEN ADDICTION

From TVs and phones to consoles and tablets, Netflix is available on almost any device with an internet connection – making it extremely difficult to manage children's screen time. The service is now adding games to its mobile app, tempting users to spend even more time on the platform. Screen addiction can distract children from important activities like schoolwork and socialising, and can impact their health by reducing their exercise and sleep.

## HACKING ATTEMPTS

With millions of users worldwide, Netflix is often targeted by hackers who try to steal usernames and passwords to gain access to people's accounts. If successful, they can then steal payment details or try to sell stolen personal data on the dark web, providing other criminals with a profitable opportunity. Netflix also doesn't provide two-factor authentication, making the hackers' task that little bit easier.

## CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

Netflix's Teleparty feature became popular during lockdown periods as it allows users from different households (friends and relatives, for example) to synchronise when they watch content. It requires an access link to be sent to the people you wish to invite; the link, however, can also be distributed to people you don't know. A text chat feature enables interaction with the other users in real-time; this represents a risk to children if a stranger gains access to the Teleparty.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### KEEP ACCOUNTS SECURE

Netflix doesn't use two-factor authentication, so a strong password is vital. Your child's Netflix password should be unique (not one they've used elsewhere) and a minimum of eight characters with a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Emphasise not to share their login details with anyone and remind them to always log out after using the app – so their account remains inaccessible, even if their device is lost or stolen.

### CHECK MATURITY RATING

Netflix warns about content that includes violence, sex, profanity and nudity. These warnings form part of the show or movie's 'maturity rating'. Users can restrict age ratings to avoid children viewing age-inappropriate content. On their profile, open the Profile and Parental Control settings and choose the maturity level for the shows and movies you want to allow.



### CREATE A KIDS' PROFILE

Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile means your child can only access content which is suitable for children aged up to 12 years. All other content is automatically blocked. This rating can be further restricted via the child's profile settings. Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile will help to prevent your child from viewing age-inappropriate content.



### SET UP PROFILE PINS

Netflix account holders can lock profiles using a four-digit PIN. Doing this can prevent your child from accessing the wrong account and viewing content that isn't appropriate for their age. Try setting a PIN for each account on your Netflix app – ideally avoiding numbers that would be easily guessed, such as dates of birth. Remember not to share these PINs with anyone, including family.

### SWITCH OFF AUTO-PLAY

When a show or movie concludes, Netflix's algorithms select content with similar themes that it thinks your child will enjoy next. This new content starts automatically after a 10-second countdown. Disabling this auto-play feature reduces the possibility of your child being shown something inappropriate and provides a natural break to help prevent them becoming too immersed in Netflix.



### CHECK VIEWING HABITS

Netflix has tools which enable parents and carers to monitor what their child has been watching. Selecting 'Viewing Activity' in each profile's account settings displays a list of what content has been viewed (and when). This can reassure parents that their child is watching age-appropriate content and can open avenues for discussing your child's favourite shows and movies, and why they like them.



# SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION  
13+

Snapchat is a photo- and video-sharing app which also allows users to chat with friends via text or audio. Users can share images and videos with specific friends, or through a 'story' (documenting the previous 24 hours) visible to their entire friend list. Snapchat usage rose during the pandemic, with many young people utilising it to connect with their peers. The app continues to develop features to engage an even larger audience and emulate current trends, rivaling platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

## CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects on the app with people they know, they may still receive friend requests from strangers. Snapchat's links with apps such as Wink and Hoop have increased this possibility. Accepting a request means that children are then disclosing personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features. This could allow predators to gain their trust for sinister purposes.

## EXCESSIVE USE

There are many features that are attractive to users and keep them excited about the app. Snap streaks encourage users to send snaps daily, Spotlight Challenges give users to the chance to obtain money and online fame, and the Spotlight feature's scroll of videos makes it easy for children to spend hours watching content.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat are not suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's Discover function lets users swipe through snippets of news stories and trending articles that often include adult content. There is currently no way to turn off this feature.

## SEXTING

Sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse. While these pictures do disappear – and the sender is notified if it has been screenshot first – users have found alternative methods to save images, such as taking pictures with a separate device.

## DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE

Snapchat's filters and lenses are a popular way for users to enhance their 'selfie game' – and recommend them to their friends. The potential issue with filters on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Comparing themselves unfavourably against other Snapchat users could threaten a child's confidence or sense of self-worth.

## VISIBLE LOCATION

My Places lets users check in and search for popular spots nearby – such as restaurants, parks or shopping centres – and recommend them to their friends. The potential issue with a young person consistently checking into locations on Snapchat is that it allows other users in their friends list (even people they have only ever met online) to see where they currently are and where they regularly go.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add function helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this feature could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).

### CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

Talk to your child about what is and isn't wise to share on Snapchat (e.g. don't post explicit images or videos, or display identifiable details like their school uniform). Remind them that once something is online, the creator loses control over where it might end up – and who with. Additionally, Snapchat's 'Spotlight' feature has a #challenge like TikTok's: it's vital that your child understands the potentially harmful consequences of taking part in these challenges.

### CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

Snapchat has recently announced that it is rolling out a new safety feature: users will receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.

### KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Your child can send Snaps directly to friends, but Stories are visible to everyone they have added, unless they change the settings. If they use SnapMaps, their location is visible unless 'Ghost Mode' is enabled (again via settings). It's prudent to emphasise the importance of not adding people they don't know in real life. This is particularly important with the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchatters to see the places your child regularly visits and checks in: strangers, bullies and groomers could use this information to engage in conversation and arrange to meet in person.

### TALK ABOUT SEXTING

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it is important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Discuss the legal implications of sending, receiving or sharing explicit images, as well as the possible emotional impact. Emphasise that your child should never feel pressured into sexting – and that if they receive unwanted explicit images, they should tell a trusted adult straight away.

### BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending explicit images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and choose report or block. There are options to state why they are reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).

# What Parents Need to Know about SQUID GAME

AGE RESTRICTION

15+

Suitable only for 15 years and over.

With themes of horror and violence, it's important for parents and carers to understand the potential risks posed to young audiences by the nine-episode Netflix-exclusive TV show, *Squid Game*. The series, rated 15+, is about a world where contestants who are deeply in debt play children's games in order to win cash prizes. The losers, however, are violently killed. The show's popularity has meant it has spread in various guises across online platforms, with a heightened risk of children and young people potentially viewing unsuitable content. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what *Squid Game* is all about.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some might argue that *Squid Game* contains content that might not even be suitable for older teens, let alone young children. Characters are brutally tortured and killed through stabbings or getting shot as a result of rules developed and enforced by a masked game master. The show also features sexual content and threats of sexual violence, as well as a strong theme of gambling that runs throughout the whole show.

## APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst the content is very much adult-themed, some features of the show seem to appeal to young children at face-value. The name "*Squid Game*" may be interpreted as a programme aimed at children rather than adults. The content itself, such as the bright and childish aesthetics, may also appeal to young children, particularly as there's a focus on playground games to go with it.

## SIMILAR CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

When using social media and streaming sites, content is recommended based on what is the user has consumed i.e. what they have watched or searched for. Therefore, there is a greater chance of your child being exposed to similar violent or horror-themed content on social media after watching a show like *Squid Game*.

## VIRAL SPIN-OFFS

As well as Netflix, *Squid Game* has grown in notoriety and prevalence on other platforms, like TikTok and YouTube, with clips of the show going viral. On YouTube Kids, a number of successful channels have taken advantage of the *Squid Game* trend, creating content such as "How to Draw *Squid Game* Characters" videos. Its popularity has also led to the creation of app games that put the player in the role of a contestant who is killed if they lose a game.

## SCENE RE-ENACTMENTS

*Squid Game*'s pervasive presence on social media has encouraged many content creators to re-enact scenes from the show, which has led to reports of children wanting to also imitate those scenes displayed on social media at home and in school. Much of this content stems from the "Red Light, Green Light" game from the first episode, where contestants attempt to make it past a giant animatronic girl before she shoots them.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Netflix has easily accessible built-in parental controls that allow you to set up a profile for your child with a specific age rating, block them from watching certain shows and even lock their account so it can't be accessed by anyone else. Netflix also allows you to access your child's viewing history to make sure they're not watching anything inappropriate for their age.

### CHECK AGE RATINGS

Age ratings on TV shows and films are a way to gauge what is suitable for audiences of different ages. If you are unsure about the content your child is watching, check the age rating to see if the TV show or film is deemed suitable for their age group. If not, try watching the show yourself or talking to other parents who have seen it before to get a better understanding of why it's been rated a certain way.

15

### MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

*Squid Game* has become a social media craze and it's possible your child will see some content related to the show on various platforms. Therefore, it's important to be aware of which websites your child has visited on their smartphone, tablet or laptop, and to also keep an eye out for which accounts they are following on social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok.

### HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Making sure your child is comfortable telling you about what they see online can go a long way to ensuring you are kept in the loop about their online use. Showing an interest in what your child is doing online gives you the opportunity to discuss what is and is not appropriate for their age group, and how they might recognise their own feelings towards content they see.

### MONITOR BEHAVIOUR

Due to the viral nature of the show, even if your child has not seen *Squid Game*, it's important to keep an eye on their behaviour. There have been reports from schools of children "playing *Squid Game*" in the playground and acting aggressively towards the losers as a way to replicate the consequences of losing in the TV show. Viewing content that makes your child feel uncomfortable could also cause them to feel distressed or distracted, so it's important you can easily spot the signs.

### WATCH THE SHOW

If you're trying to figure out whether you should let your child watch *Squid Game*, it might be a good idea to watch the show yourself first. Doing so will allow you to get a better understanding of the show's content and themes, as well as help you decide if this is something you'd feel comfortable with your child being exposed to.



# What parents need to know about INSTAGRAM

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**  
Accounts over the age of 13 can create an account

Instagram is a hugely popular social networking app with over 1 billion users worldwide. The app, which is accessible on iOS and Android devices, allows users to upload images and videos to their feed, create interactive stories, exchange private messages or search, explore and follow other accounts they like. Images and videos can be transformed with an array of filters to edit the shot before sharing and anyone with an account can see others' online 'galleries' if their account is not private. To make posts easier to find, users can include searchable hashtags and captions to their uploads. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Instagram is about.

## HOOKED ON SCROLLING

Many social media platforms, Instagram included, have been designed in a way to keep us engaged on them for as long as possible. Behavioural economist, Nir Eyal calls this the 'Hook Model' and the Instagram feed is a great example of this. Children and adults may find themselves scrolling to try and get a dopamine release. Scrolling may become addictive and it can be difficult to stop until children find that 'something' they are looking for, quickly losing track of time as they get deeper into their Instagram feed.

## SLIDING INTO DMS

Direct messages (or DMs) on Instagram allow users to share posts, images, videos, voice messages and calls between each other privately (or in a private group). Even if your child's account is set to private, anybody has the option to message them and send them content. If the person is not on your child's friends list, the message will still be sent to their inbox but the user has to accept their request to see the message.

## INFLUENCER CULTURE

Influencers are sometimes paid thousands of pounds to promote a product, service, app and much more on social media. When celebrities or influencers post such an advert, they should add a disclaimer somewhere in the post which states that they have been paid for it. Commonly, this is well-hidden in the hashtags or in the comments of their post, making it unclear that their photo/video is actually an advert. This can be very misleading to young people who may be influenced into buying/wearing something promoted by somebody they admire, creating a false sense of reality and potentially affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

## IMPACT ON WELLBEING

In a report by the RSPH, Instagram was ranked the worst for young people's mental health. Using filters on photos on Instagram can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Children may strive for more 'likes' by using retouchingly edited photos. Judging themselves against other users on the app might threaten their confidence or self-worth. In early 2019, Instagram banned images of self-harm and suicide, following the suicide of 14-year-old Molly Russell, who had reportedly been looking at such material on the platform. They since extended the ban to include drawings, cartoons and memes.

## LIVE STREAMING TO STRANGERS

Live streaming on Instagram allows users to connect with friends and followers in real-time and comment on videos during broadcast. If your child's account is private, only their approved followers can see their story. It's important to note they may have accepted a friend request from someone they don't know, which means they could be live streaming to strangers. Children also risk sharing content they later regret, which could be re-shared online for years to come. Public accounts allow anybody to view, so we suggest your child blocks followers they don't know. In early 2019, data gathered by the NSPCC found that sex offenders were grooming children on Instagram more than on any other online platform.

## IN-APP PAYMENTS

Instagram allows payments for products directly through the app. It operates under the same rules as Facebook Payments, which state that if you are under the age of 18, you can only use this feature with the involvement of a parent or guardian.

## EXPOSING LOCATION

Public locations can be added to a user's photos/videos and also in their stories. While this may seem like a good idea at the time, it can expose the location of your child. This is particularly more of a risk if it is on their story, as it is real time. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street name, house and even tagging in the location of the photo uploaded to Instagram can expose the child's location, making it easy to locate them. If their account is public, anyone can access their account and see their location.

## HUACKED HASHTAGS

Hashtags are an integral part of how Instagram works, but they can come with risks. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one particular thing in mind, and before you know it hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn't be exposed to.

## IGTV

Instagram TV (IGTV) works similar to YouTube. Users can watch videos from favourite accounts on the platform or create their own channel and post their own videos. It's important to note anyone can create an Instagram TV channel and doesn't have to be friends with a person to follow an account and watch their videos. In 2018, Instagram apologized and removed some of its TV content which featured sexually suggestive imagery of children. As the feature may encourage spending more time using the app, it's important to set time limits to avoid children's sleep or education being disturbed.

@MENTION

## Top Tips for Parents & Carers

### RESTRICT DIRECT MESSAGES

If your child receives a message from somebody they do not know, encourage them not to accept their message request and 'block' this person; this is the only way to stop them messaging your child again. Children can also 'tap and hold' the individual message to report it directly to Instagram as well as reporting the account itself.

### LOOK OUT FOR #ADS

In 2018, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority launched an investigation into celebrities who were posting adverts on social media and not declaring that they were paid for. Influencers must clearly state that they have been paid for their posts, for example using a hashtag like #ad or #sponsored. Teach your child to look out for the signs of a paid post/advert and discuss with them that not everything they see from celebrities is their personal choice and opinion.

### MANAGE NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS

If your child is receiving unwanted or negative comments, they can block that account so that they can't interact with them. This stops them seeing and commenting on their posts, stories and live broadcasts. In addition, your child can instantly delete unwanted comments from their posts, turn them off completely and control who can tag and mention them in comments, captions or stories, from everyone, only people they follow, or no one at all.

### MANAGE DIGITAL WELLBEING

Instagram now has an in-built activity dashboard that allows users to monitor and control how much time they spend on the app. Users can add a 'daily reminder' to set a limit on how much time they want to spend on Instagram, prompting them to consider if it's been too long. In addition, some users have caught up with all the previous posts since they last logged on, they'll receive a 'You've completely caught up' message. Both features can help you have a conversation with your child about how much time they are spending on the app and to set healthy time limits.

### PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your child may unknowingly give away personal information on their profile or in their live streams. Talk to them about what their personal information is and make sure that they do not disclose anything, including their location, to anyone during a livestream, comment, direct message or any other tool for communication on the platform, even to their friends.

### USE A PRIVATE ACCOUNT

By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible to anyone. A private account means that you have to approve a request if somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos. Children should also use a secure password and enable a two-factor authentication to add an extra layer of security to their account.

### FILTER INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS

Instagram has an 'anti-bullying' filter, which hides comments relating to a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's wellbeing or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so that they can take action against the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, which should always be enabled. Children can also report abusive behaviour or inappropriate/offensive material directly to Instagram from the app. This includes posts, comments and accounts.

### TURN OFF SHARING

Even though this feature will not stop people from taking screenshots, it will stop others being able to directly share photos and videos from a story as a message to another user. This feature can be turned off in the settings. We also recommend turning off the feature which automatically shares photos and videos from a story to a Facebook account.

### REMOVE PAYMENT METHODS

If you are happy for your child to have a card associated with their Instagram account, we suggest adding a PIN which needs to be entered before making a payment; this will also help prevent unauthorised purchases. This can be added in the payment settings tab.

**DON'T FORGET TO BE VIGILANT & TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITIES!**

## Meet our expert

Perveen Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience of working in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks, a web resource helping parents and children thrive in a digital world.



## \*NEW FOR 2020\* INSTAGRAM REELS

Instagram Reels is the latest update from Instagram that gives users the ability to record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio effects, and new creative tools. It is the exact answer to TikTok and can be accessed via the Reels feature. Reels can be shared with friends and family, however, if your child has a public account, it could be shared wider via 'Explore' and viewed by millions of strangers online.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



With over 14 million daily users, Discord is one of the most popular communication tools for gamers. It allows you to create or join what are known as 'servers', where different users can talk in groups via text message or voice call. There is also the option to send direct messages and make video calls.

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**



# What parents need to know about **DISCORD**



**INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**

Your child can access almost any chat server on Discord. This means they can easily be exposed to content and conversations that are inappropriate, upsetting or potentially harmful.



**SEXUAL IMAGERY**

Despite there being guidelines in place to prevent it, users are able to circulate adult content. This can include sexualised images, pornographic videos and provocative discussions. It's important to stay alert and know the risks that your child could be exposed to.



**RISK OF CYBERBULLYING**

Interactions on the platform are largely unregulated. This means other users can easily say and show things to your child that might be offensive and upsetting. The competitive nature of gaming can lead users to make abusive and harmful remarks about your child.



**HIDDEN CHARGES**

Though the basic platform is free, your child will be encouraged to sign up to premium subscriptions, which give extra perks, such as animated emojis and free games. The two options are known as 'Nitro Classic' (which costs \$4.99 a month) and Nitro (which costs \$9.99 a month). Prices are only converted to pound sterling during the payment process.



**RISK OF CYBERCRIME**

Cybercriminal groups have been linked to the platform due to reports of hackers sharing stolen data. It's also possible that your child may be encouraged to share the data of their friends, either through peer pressure, or 'for fun', without realising the consequences.



**STRANGER DANGER**

To create an account, you only need to display a username and profile image. This makes it easy for someone to hide his or her real identity. Predators from anywhere in the world can join a chat server, message your child and quickly leave to avoid detection. Forbes reports groomers have been targeting children susceptible to online coercion on the platform.



**NOS** National Online Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

## Top Tips to Protect Your Child



**1 BE WARY OF WHAT'S SHARED**

Whatever your child says or shares on the platform can be seen, heard and shared with a much larger audience. Be careful to make sure your child understands this and does not say or share anything that could be deemed offensive, harmful or put themselves or others at risk.

You can find Discord's own guide for parents here: <https://blog.discordapp.com/parents-guide-to-discord-c77d91793e9c>



**2 IMPROVE SECURITY SETTINGS**

To help protect your child, make sure they set strong passwords. You should consider using the 'two-factor authentication' function for extra protection. It's also important to remind your child to never to share their personal information, or the details of another user.



**3 CHECK THEIR FRIEND LIST**

You can restrict who is able to make 'friend requests' to your child in the 'Friends' tab. It's a good idea to deselect the default option that allows anyone to connect. Of course, you should also talk to your child about why it's a risk to allow strangers to connect with them through such platforms.



**4 REPORT & BLOCK SUSPICIOUS USERS**

Make sure your child knows how to report and block abusive or suspicious users. If you do find your child suffering repeated abuse, contact the platform directly using the email: [abuse@discordapp.com](mailto:abuse@discordapp.com). It's a good idea to teach your child how to screenshot any negative interactions too.



**5 BE WARY OF NSFW CONTENT**

Public forums on the platform are a potential venue for inappropriate content that you should be wary of. There is a Discord mascot known as 'Wumpus', which is supposed to represent anyone under 18. Anyone who posts content unsuitable for under-18s, should mark it NSFW (Not Suitable For Wumpus).



**6 SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS**

It's important you actively teach your child to treat other users with respect and behave online the same way as they would offline.

Take the time to read through Discord's Community Guidelines with your child. Find them at: [www.discordapp.com/guidelines](http://www.discordapp.com/guidelines)



Everything You Need to Know about...

# 'Finstas'

While we are seeing social media platforms introduce features that focus on curating content for your 'close friend' groups, another trend is seeing a resurgence in popularity with children and young people in the UK.

A 'finsta' (a slang term that combines 'fake' and 'Insta', a popular shortened title for 'Instagram') may be the new choice of account for younger generations.

## What is a Finsta?

Surely a finsta is a fake Instagram account? Not exactly. A finsta is not the same thing as a fake account (which often engages in scam-like behaviour). Instead, a 'finsta' refers to a secondary account where a user's identity and profile are typically hidden, with access only available to a chosen group of friends or followers.

It can be on any platform, including TikTok and Facebook, but Instagram seems to be the most popular choice. These accounts often use pseudonyms to avoid using real names.

### Why would a young person create a finsta?

- Authenticity**  
allows them to be 'real' with their close friends.
- Connection**  
with the social media content they want to see.
- Anonymity**  
means not worrying about their public image.
- Freedom**  
to post without anxiety over reception or 'like count'.
- Privacy**  
to explore 'niche' interests separately from 'real' account.



According to the 2020/21 #Ofcom report, two-thirds of 8-11-year-olds in the UK had multiple accounts or profiles, with almost half of them running an account just for their family to see.

### Top Tips for Parents and Carers

- Remind the young person in your care that nothing they post online is truly private and to think before posting. There are multiple ways their posts could be misconstrued or misused by others.
- Go through the process of protecting the images they post. Discussing things like copyright and reporting will help empower the young person in your care to make smart choices and to know there is help available if they need it.
- Reinforce the importance of protecting personal information. Remind your young person not to share any personal details with anyone they do not know in real life, even if they feel comfortable.
- Have an open, non-judgemental conversation about finstas (and other secondary accounts). If they have one, ask about the type of content they are posting and what they feel is the benefit of having different accounts.
- Support their decision to have private accounts, but ask if you can check in with them around the material they are posting and the people they are interacting with. Remember - boundaries are important to create an environment of trust and comfort.

## Risks

- Unexpected behaviour** - Anonymity might encourage young people to engage in unlikely behaviour, such as posting sexually explicit content, pursuing dangerous political ideals, or bullying.
- Missed help** - Worrying posts hidden from public view may not be addressed by the appropriate help, especially if it involves self-harm or other destructive behaviours.
- Unwanted exposure** - Others with access to the account may take screenshots of posts and send them to others, or reveal the identity of the account owner.
- Harmful opinions** - Extremist behaviour or insensitive language in 'opinion pieces' may expose young people to others with harmful intentions and could implicate them in illegal activity.
- Social interaction** - A young person may be approached by other users with malicious intentions. This could leave them vulnerable to sexual manipulation, grooming, bullying, and exploitation.

## What You Need to Know about...

# BeReal.

Age Rating  
13+

The way children and young people use social media is changing. They want to engage with posts from their friends instead of 'suggested posts' or adverts for content they don't care about. As social media begins to turn away from filters and 'Instagrammable moments', one app in particular has seen a recent surge in popularity with children and young people

## What is BeReal?

BeReal is a free social media app that asks users to take a quick snapshot of an 'authentic moment' during their day to share with their followers.

There are no filters or opportunities to stage the 'perfect photo' – what you see is what you get. It is formatted to make the user show their 'real self'.

This app was developed in France in 2020, but has seen a recent jump in popularity with **3.5 million downloads** since January 2022 and a **315% increase** in monthly active users.

'Realmojis' are selfie versions of emojis a.k.a YOU get to be the emoji!

## How does it work?

-  **BeReal only lets users post once a day.** It notifies users of a two-minute 'posting window' via push notification. If they miss the window, they are marked as late.
-  **No profiles, no followers, no likes, no messaging.** Users and their 'friends' can only post comments, emojis, and 'realmojis' on the unfiltered posts that day before it is archived.
-  **Focuses on the 'real' you.** Users cannot use filters or other photo editing tools and must take a live photo using the app.
-  **A 'discovery' page is used instead of a search page.** This is a feed that lets users see others BeReal posts from all around the world.

## Areas of Concern

-  **Notification dependent** so a young person could become easily distracted during inappropriate times of the day (e.g. while in school or during family dinner).
-  **Persuasive design** uses negative reinforcement if the app isn't used (limited viewing, labelling late posts) so it persuades users to prioritise it in their day.
-  **Perception anxiety** means a young person may begin to experience anxiety over what their friends will think of them on the app.
-  **Time constraints** like school, jobs, driving, and events mean a young person may not be able to access their phone in order to post.
-  **Possible oversharing** could happen in an attempt to be as 'real' as possible and not seem 'fake'.

## Risks

-  **Sense of urgency** could mean a young person posts something they wouldn't normally post.
-  **Personal information** could be compromised in the 'candid' photos (like location, school, or extracurriculars).
-  **Harmful interactions** like bullying, exploitation, manipulation, peer abuse, and/or inappropriate behaviour could happen in the comments or with 'realmojis'.
-  **Safety settings** are lacking – there are no privacy features, no parental controls, and no blocking abilities on this platform. Just reporting!
-  **The discovery page** encourages interaction between complete strangers and could lead to communication on other apps with messaging functions (like Instagram or WhatsApp).

## Top Tips for Parents and Carers

- Discuss responsible sharing** - nothing too personal should go online.
- Walkthrough image ownership together** - their image has worth!
- Be an identity reminder** - an app does not define the type of person they are.
- Talk about authenticity** - the difference between 'real' and 'too much information'.
- Identify their Trusted Adults** - ask who they can trust if they are worried!
- Protect their personal information** - how can they stay safe online?

### FOMO WARNING

Any attempt to delete or skip a post results in the user not being able to see other posts

Online Safety  
Shareable by

 SAFER SCHOOLS

    
oursaferschools.co.uk