Dear Parents / Carers

Please find some important information on: **Online safety**

Technology is at the very centre of all our lives today - especially in our children's lives. Learning how to use technology wisely is an essential skill for life and learning in the 21st century. However, at a time when there is increased access to numerous different technology platforms, many children are at a greater risk of online grooming, cyber bullying and exposure to inappropriate or illegal content online.

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy we believe that both school and parents/carers need to work in partnership in order to safeguard children from harm online.

At school, we believe that promoting E. Safety plays a critical role in protecting our pupils online and as a result, pupils are taught about how to stay safe and how to behave appropriately online. Waterhouses CE Primary Academy have extensive security measures in place which keep children safe whilst using technology in school and their usage is monitored to help safeguard them from potential dangers or unsuitable materials.

Parents/carers have a highly important role to play in keeping children safe online. There are many ways parents/carers can help minimise the risks associated with children being online and increase parents/carers awareness of online safety. The list below provides ideas to help parents/carers keep children safe online:

Age appropriate

Only give your child access to devices, websites, apps, games and social media sites that are age appropriate. Access the PEGI guidance (https://pegi.info/page/pegi-age-ratings) to inform your choices when buying games for your child, or deciding whether the games they are playing are appropriate, by following the age-ratings assigned to each game.
Read each game's advice for parents and play the game yourself to help you understand what it involves.

Common Sense Media Common offer a trusted library of independent age-based and educational ratings and reviews for movies, games, apps, TV shows, websites, books and music which can be found using the following link https://www.commonsensemedia.org/.

Below is a poster produced by National Online Safety which offers information on age ratings.

National Online Safety - <u>A parent's guide to Age Rating</u>

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What parents need to know about
AGE RATINGS

bbfc   **PEGI**

If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.

RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

U — Universal, suitable for all ages

PG — Parental Guidance required

12 — Suitable for people aged 12 and over

12A — Suitable for people aged 12 and over, should anyone under 12 wish to watch the film they must be accompanied by an adult

15 — Suitable for people aged 15 and over

18 — Suitable for people aged 18 and over

R18 — Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers

WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

Source: www.bbfc.co.uk

RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.
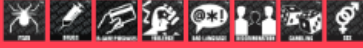
WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

3 www.pegi.info   **7** www.pegi.info   **12** www.pegi.info   **16** www.pegi.info   **18** www.pegi.info

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:

LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.
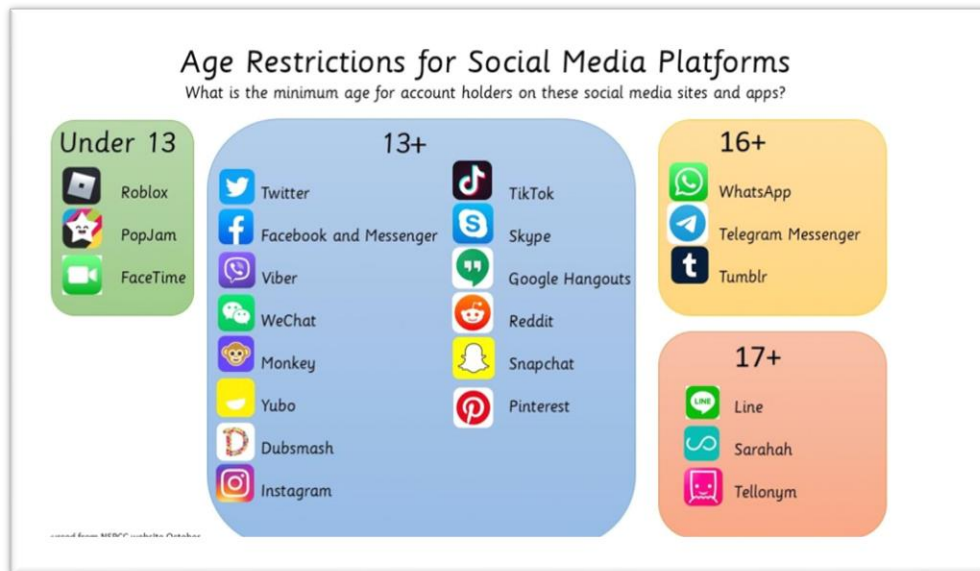
PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: www.pegi.info

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides

Schools are also receiving reports and concerns around children being exposed to inappropriate material online via many different platforms including You Tube, Netflix, Roblox and Tik Tok and bringing the ideas into the school playground to role-play them as games with their friends. Again, these games ae not appropriate and we will not allow them to be played within school.

We wanted to make you aware as parents and carers of the age restrictions on these sites:

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms
What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

Under 13
- Roblox
- PopJam
- FaceTime

13+
- Twitter
- Facebook and Messenger
- Viber
- WeChat
- Monkey
- Yubo
- Dubsmash
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Pinterest

16+
- WhatsApp
- Telegram Messenger
- Tumblr

17+
- Line
- Sarahah
- Tellonym

Please ask yourselves, as a family are your children engaging in any of the social media platforms at a younger age. Only give your child access to devices, websites, apps, games and social media sites that you feel comfortable with and not because of peer-pressure.

Communication

Talk to your child about why it is important to stay safe online. Explain that whilst the internet is a fun, exciting and knowledge-rich tool, it is also a place where people may wish to bring them into dangerous activities or expose them to unpleasant material. It is important to be clear that you are not saying your child may never use the internet again, or that everything on it is harmful – it is about teaching them to have a greater awareness and to be able to manage and report any risks. Keep an open dialogue with your child – letting them know they can always, talk to you about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online is key to keeping them safe.

Below is a child friendly poster produced by National Online Safety, which helps to give advice to children about online safety and advice to parents/carers on how to talk to children about online safety.

NOS ★

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Online Safety Tips For Children

Do's ✓

1 KEEP YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVATE ONLINE

Only share it with people you know like friends and family. Ask a trusted adult, like your teacher or a family member, to help you change your privacy settings so that strangers can't see it.

2 SPEAK POLITELY AND BE KIND TO OTHERS WHEN YOU SPEAK TO THEM ONLINE

Treat them like you would treat them in real life and always remember your manners.

3 TELL A TRUSTED ADULT IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED ONLINE

If other another person is sending you nasty messages, a trusted adult will be able to help you collect evidence and report the person to the relevant authorities.

4 USE PASSWORDS TO PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Ask a trusted adult to help you create a password that you can easily remember but which is hard for other people to guess.

5 ALWAYS CHECK WITH A TRUSTED ADULT FIRST BEFORE USING A DEVICE OR DOWNLOADING A NEW APP

This is so that they can check it is safe for you to use and make sure the privacy settings are right.

6 TELL A TRUSTED ADULT IF YOU SEE SOMETHING ONLINE WHICH YOU DON'T LIKE

This can include anything that upsets you, makes you feel sad or which you're unsure about.

7 USE THE INTERNET TO HAVE FUN AND TO HELP YOU FIND OUT INFORMATION ABOUT THINGS

Remember to ask your trusted adult for help and always use child friendly search engines so that the information you get back is safe.

✖ Don'ts

1 ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS FROM STRANGERS OR PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW

Always tell a trusted adult if somebody you don't know tries to contact you online.

2 SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON YOUR DEVICE

Instead, go out and play with your friends, get some fresh air and try to exercise more. This will help you stay fit and healthy.

3 REPLY TO MESSAGES FROM ONLINE BULLIES OR PEOPLE WHO SEND YOU NASTY MESSAGES

The most important thing to do is to tell a trusted adult and then block the person from contacting you.

4 COPY PEOPLE'S WORK ONLINE OR PRETEND IT IS YOURS

This is called plagiarism and can get you into a lot of trouble.

BY AHMED
BY OSCAR

5 BE MEAN OR NASTY ONLINE

Behave online like you would in real life and don't post anything that can make you look like a bad person. Things that you post online can stay there for a very long time.

6 USE YOUR DEVICES CLOSE TO BEDTIME

This will allow your brain to rest so that you can get a good night's sleep, stay focused at school and perform better in class.

7 SHARE PERSONAL INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET WITH STRANGERS

Always tell a trusted adult if somebody you don't know asks you for your personal information.

And finally:

Supervision and monitoring and parental controls

Ensure all devices used by your child are kept in a communal space, or a space where they can be supervised whilst using their devices. You can check what your child has been doing by looking at the history in your internet browser, Set parental controls that are designed to help parents/carers manage their child's online activities. However, do not rely on parental controls on devices over you offering support and advice to your child online, as they are not always 100% effective and some children know how to bypass them. The use of 'SafeSearch' is highly recommended for use with children. Most web search engines will have a 'SafeSearch' function, which will allow you to limit the content your child is exposed to whilst online. Look out for the 'Settings' button on your web browser homepage (often shaped like a small cog).

For further information on setting up parental control, see the following link:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Parental-controls/

For further information on how to set up parental controls on different devices, see the following link:

https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/

Other resources for Parents/Carers:

For more information and resources on ensuring your child's safety online, you can visit the websites below:

- www.childnet.com

- www.internetmatters.org

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk

- www.nspcc.org.uk

- www.getsafeonline.org

- https://parentinfo.org/

- https://parentzone.org.uk/parents

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely Mrs Joy Hulme DSL