



TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT LIFE ONLINE

LGfL 

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What are you most **WORRIED** about when your child is **ONLINE**?



YOU don't need to be an **EXPERT** ... be a **PARENT**



- **It's your choice** – don't let others dictate when the right time is to use tech.
- **Stay involved** – make time to communicate, talk about what they are doing. What do they enjoy? What makes them laugh?
- **Don't quiz them** – have regular conversations. What's their favourite app? What is the best site to learn new things from?
- **Join in** – watch them play a game and join in. Who are they playing with? Do they know the other players?
- **'Show me how...'** – ask their advice to help you with your privacy settings, who you should add as a friend, are there any risks?
- **Lead by example** – children learn as much from watching as they do from being told not to do something, so model good behaviour
- **Reassure them** – tell them that they won't get in trouble and that you are always there to help



PARENTSAFE

Keeping your children safe: online & beyond

This page is for parents - if you are a teacher, click [here](#)

It's never easy to know how to keep our children safe when they aren't with us, and sometimes even when are, if we don't know what's happening in their lives or on their devices! Who are they talking to, what are they doing, are they okay? Don't despair though...scroll through this page for help or click a button to go straight to a particular topics.

TOP TIPS RIGHT NOW

SAFE SETTINGS & CONTROLS

WHAT'S THAT APP?

TALKING TO CHILDREN

SCREENTIME

TOP TOPICS (porn, bullying, ...)

SEX & RELATIONSHIPS

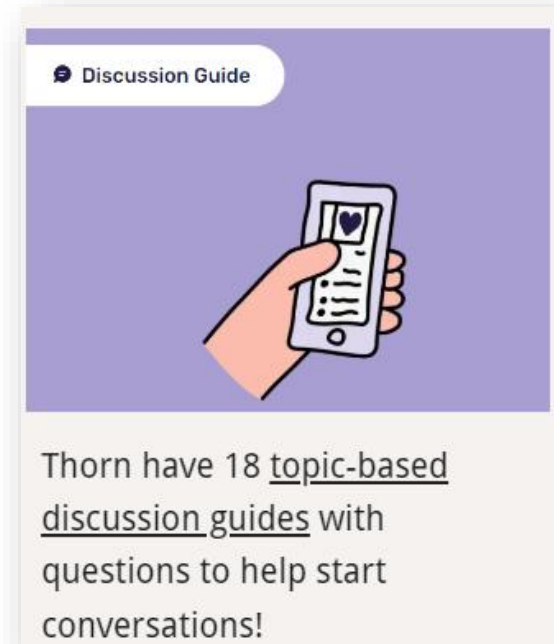
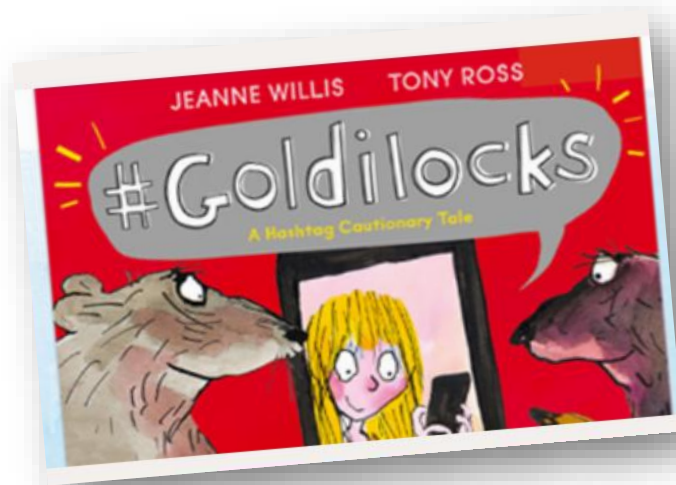
HELP & REPORTING

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parentsafe.lgfl.net

Find conversation starters, story time ideas and top tips to reinforce key safety messages at parentsafe.lgfl.net



PARENTSAFE
Keeping your children safe: online & beyond

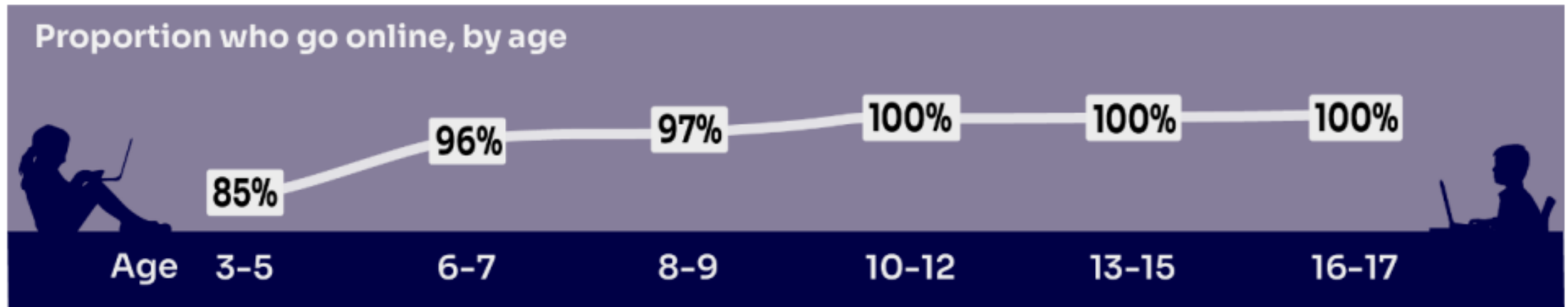




DEVICE USE AND OWNERSHIP

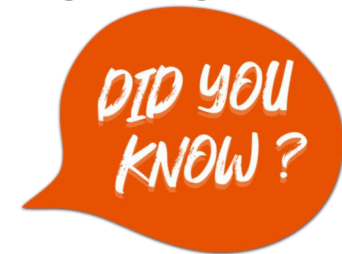


HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW about your child's life online?



Almost all children (96%) aged 3 – 17 went online in 2024, highlighting the centrality of the internet in their lives:

- Younger children commonly use **tablets** to go online
- Older children are more likely to use **mobile phones**

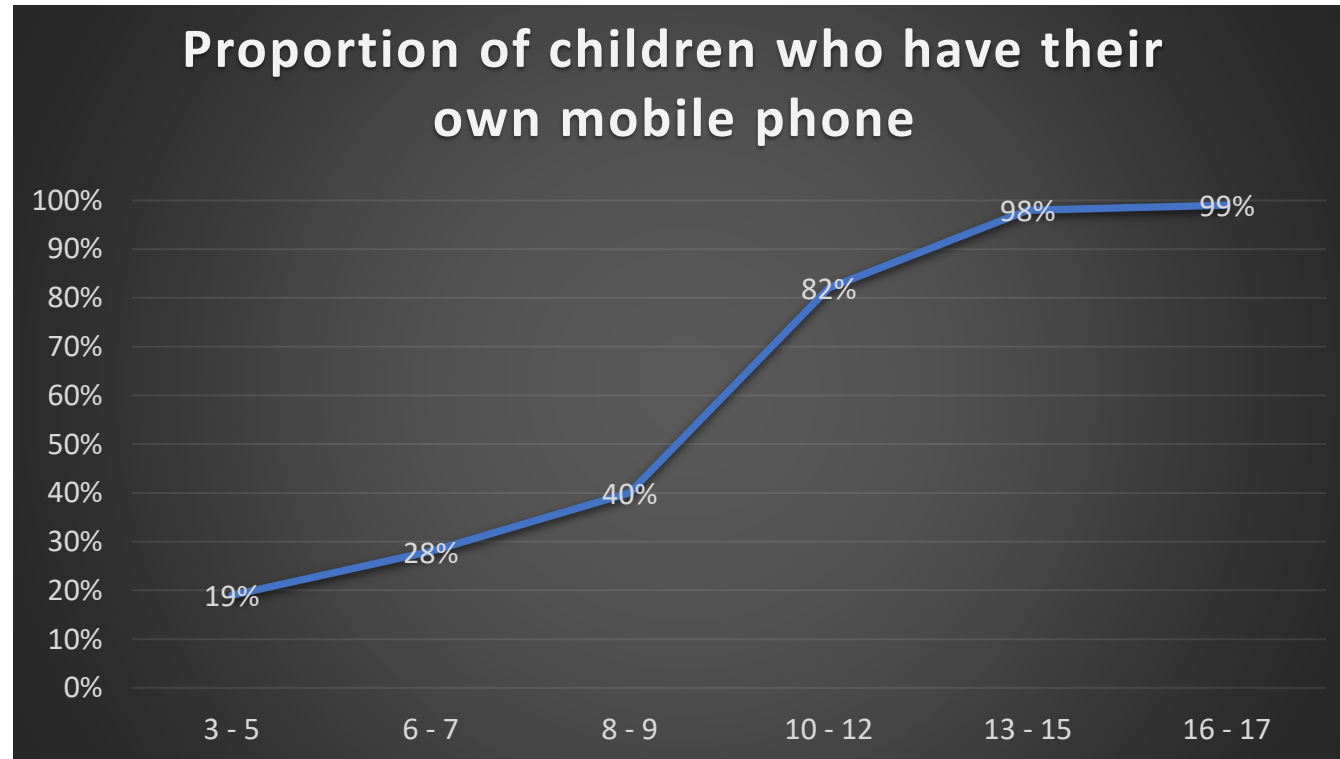
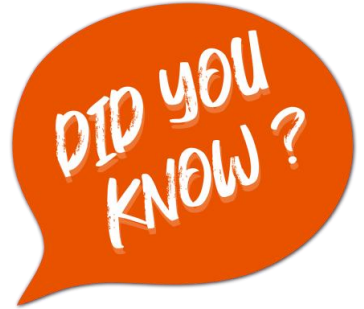




Does your child have their **OWN MOBILE PHONE?** If so, is it a **SMART PHONE?**



What **AGE** do you think is appropriate?





SMARTPHONE or 'NON'-SMART / BRICK phone?

- Internet access
- Social media, apps and games
- Notifications
- Anytime connection
- Parental controls

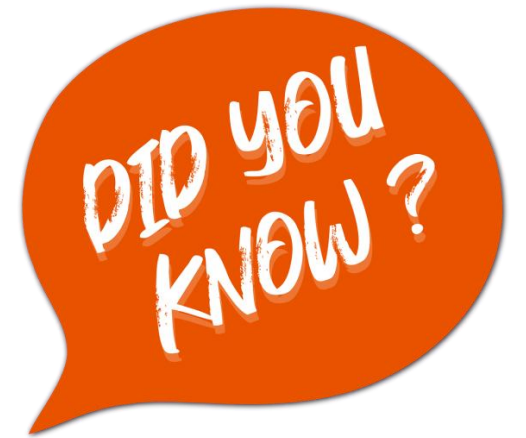
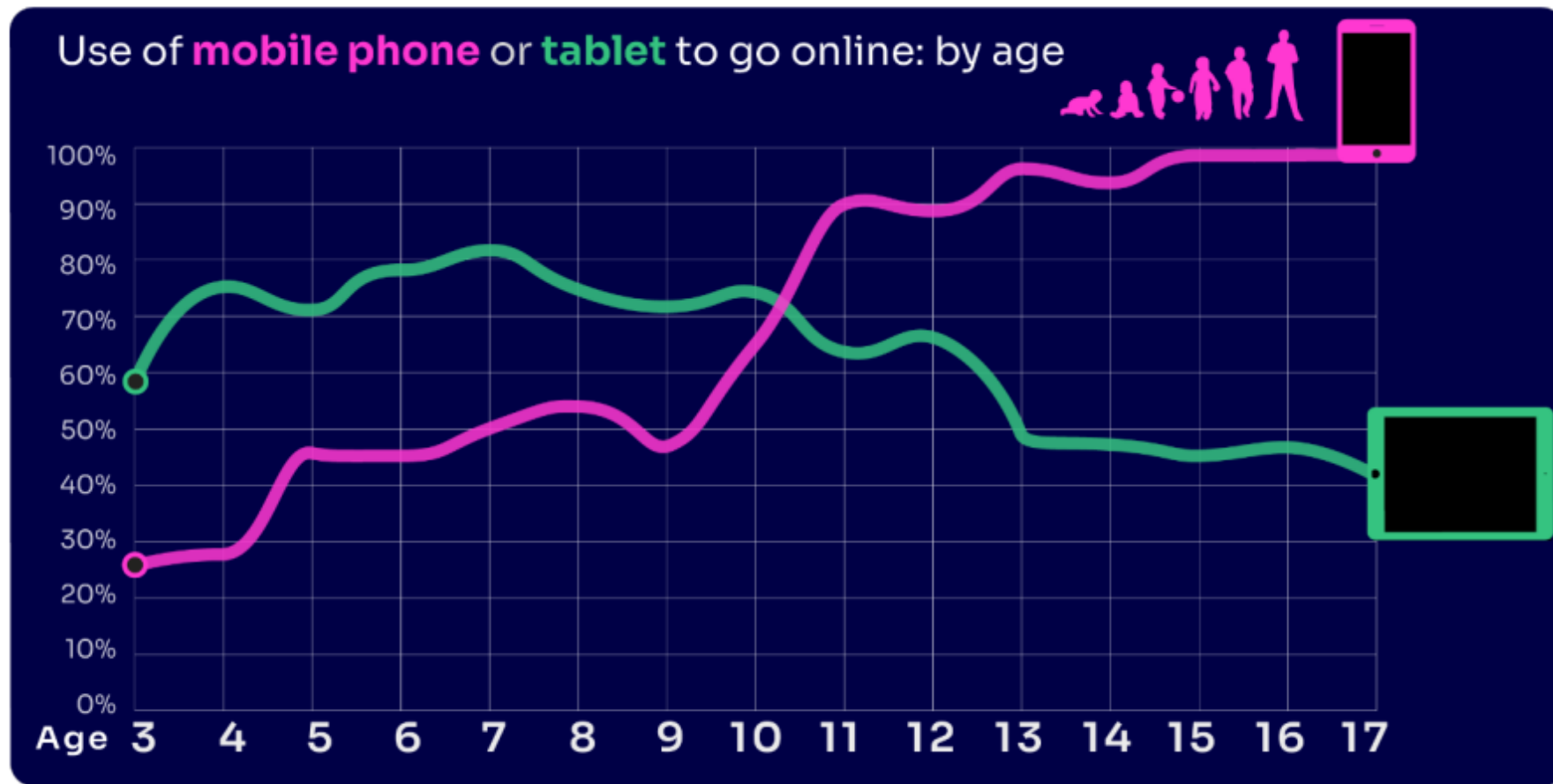


REMEMBER IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Every child and situation is unique,
and you are best placed to know their needs

- NO internet access
- Some games
- Anytime phone calls and texts
- Limited parental controls





- **By age 11, nine in ten children own their own mobile phone**, distinct from using a family device
- This correlates with **transition from primary to secondary school**.



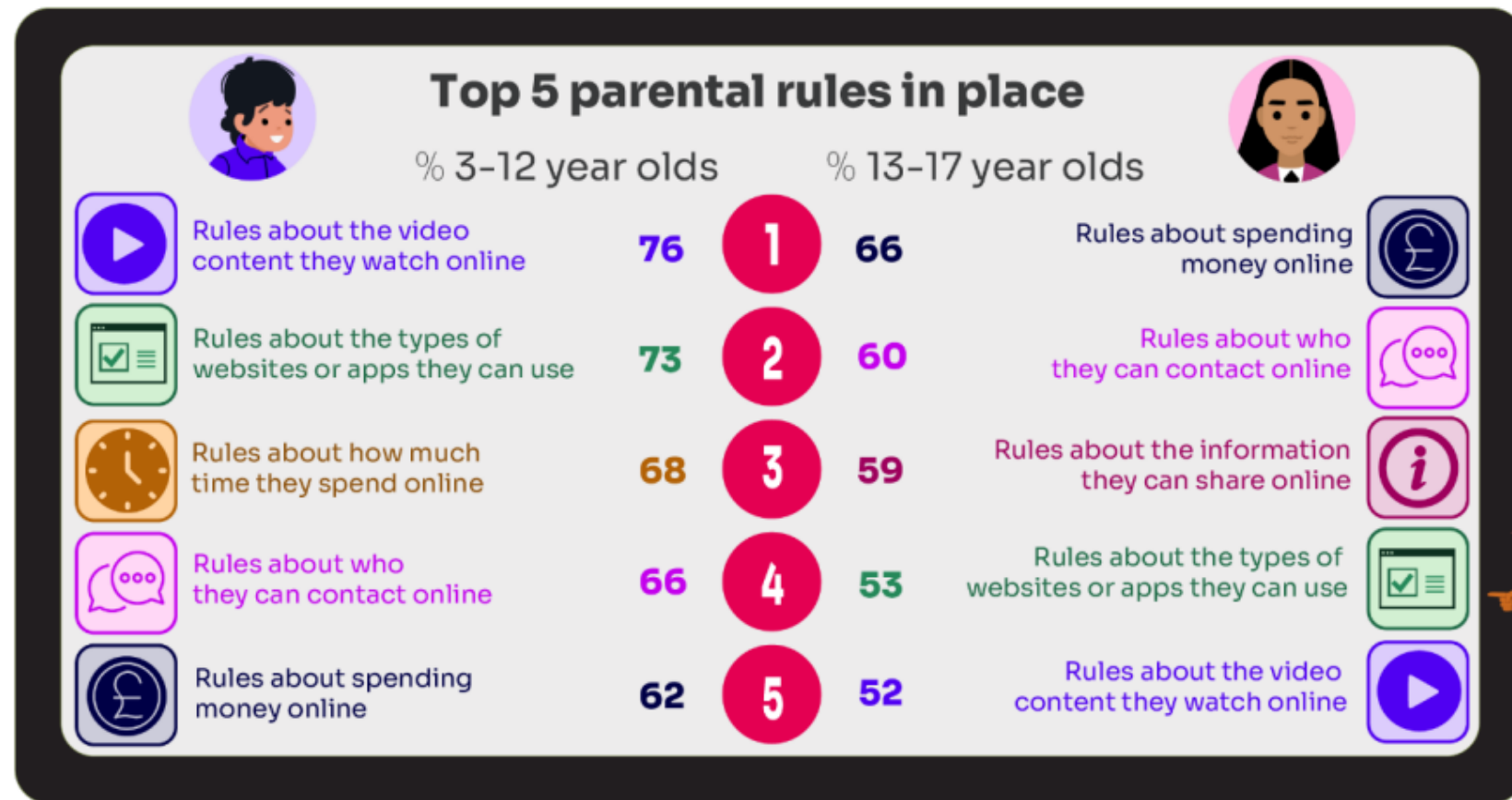
SUPERVISION AND PARENTAL CONTROLS



What **RULES** do **YOU SET** about being online?

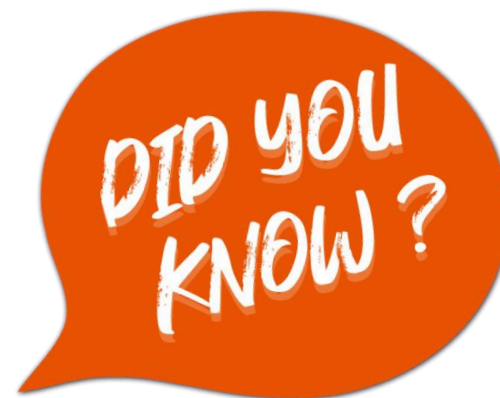
What do you do that **WORKS**?

While parental concerns in some areas have increased considerably, their **enforcement of rules appears to be diminishing**, partly due to parents' **resignation** about their **ability to intervene** in their children's online lives.





Do you **RESTRICT** their **MOBILE PHONE USE**?
If so, have you found it **CHALLENGING**?



Primary

93% have restrictions at home

74% when in bed at night time

65% when having meals

61% when doing homework

39% when spending time with family



Secondary

81% have restrictions at home

55% when having meals

54% when in bed at night time

36% when doing homework

33% when spending time with family





Digital Family Agreement

Why not have a family agreement to:

- **clarify** what is allowed...or not
- **establish** ground rules like no phones at the table or in the bedroom at night-time
- **agree** shared expectations to reduce arguments and keep everyone safe & healthy



parentsafe.lgfl.net

Download it at parentsafe.lgfl.net/digital-family-agreement



PDF version to view, print and write on

Powerpoint version to edit online

Google Sheets version to edit online

Digital Family Agreement



I will:

Why?

- Check with dad before I chat with anyone for the first time, even if they are a 'chatbot'
- Check with mum before getting a new app or game, or buying an add-on so she can check it is safe
- Not post or share any personal information, e.g. mobile, address to stay private and safe
- Check with mum and dad before going 'live' and explain what I can do to avoid any risks
- Put my phone down when we're eating together or family want to talk, as it's respectful
- Turn off notifications when I'm doing homework or at bedtime so I can concentrate and sleep
- Come off my devices an hour before bedtime to help me unwind and sleep

If there are any issues:

We will talk about it calmly and respectfully

I may have to show you more about what I do on devices, or face consequences

Parent/carer will:

Why?

- Put our devices down when you want to talk to me/us so we can model good behaviour
- Keep our mobiles away for important family time e.g. breakfast and dinner so we can have quality time and talk
- Trust you to manage your screen time sensibly as we agreed, and only say something if I/we are worried, to help you stay safe and healthy
- Ask permission before sharing any photos of you to respect your privacy

If I'm worried by anything:
I can tell mum and dad, and they won't judge me

I can talk to.....
At school

I can contact
Childline or The Mix

Signed: *Sophie Mum Dad*

Today's date: *22nd July*

Date we will review this: *22nd October*

Download me again and find more support for parents



What's wrong with **SHARENTING**?

(when parents share photos of their children online)

- Identity theft
- Permanence of digital content
- Losing control of images
- Exposure to child predators
- Creates their children's digital footprints before they are old enough to consent to it





Do you **SUPERVISE** your child's online activity? **HOW?**

Main online supervision method used (% of parents whose children go online)

Being nearby and regularly checking what they do

3-5s	66%
6-7s	75%
8-9s	76%



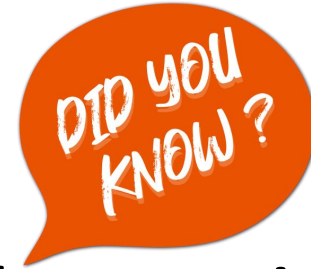
Asking about what they are doing or have been doing online

10-12s	70%
13-15s	64%
16-17s	48%





Have you set up parental **CONTROLS/PRIVACY SETTINGS** for **ALL DEVICES** and **NETWORKS**?



- Controls need to be set up on both the **broadband connection** **AND** each individual device
- These **do not come as standard** so it's worth checking

They are important because they allow you to:

- **Block and filter** upsetting or inappropriate content or sites
- **Plan what time and how long** your child can go online for



Parental control apps like [Google Family Link](#), [Screen Time](#) and [Microsoft Family](#) can let you set limits across devices, apps and platforms

DID YOU
KNOW?

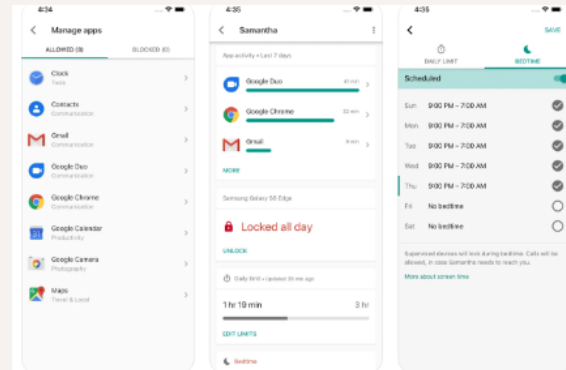
SAFE SETTINGS, CONTROLS & MONITORING

Apple, Android and Microsoft have tools to help you control what younger children can use and how long for. Click the images below for details. Once they are older and have your trust, the same tools can help avoid arguments and help them learn to self-regulate (how long have they really been on insta today? have they put down the phone at all in the last week?).



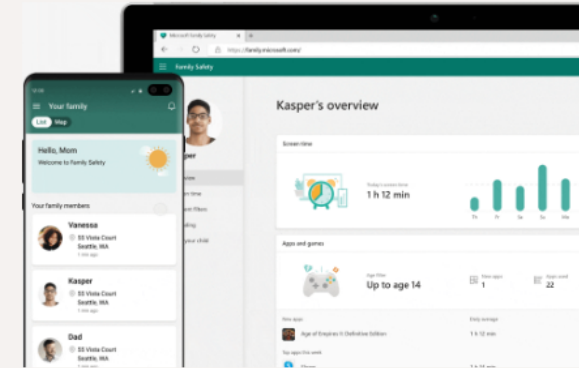
Apple Screen Time

Great for both parental controls and teen self-regulation



Google Family Link

Digital Wellbeing is the next step for the older ones after Family Link



Microsoft Family Safety

There are no self-regulation features for older teens, but Family Safety is great for the younger ones

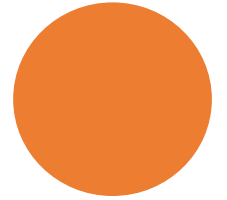
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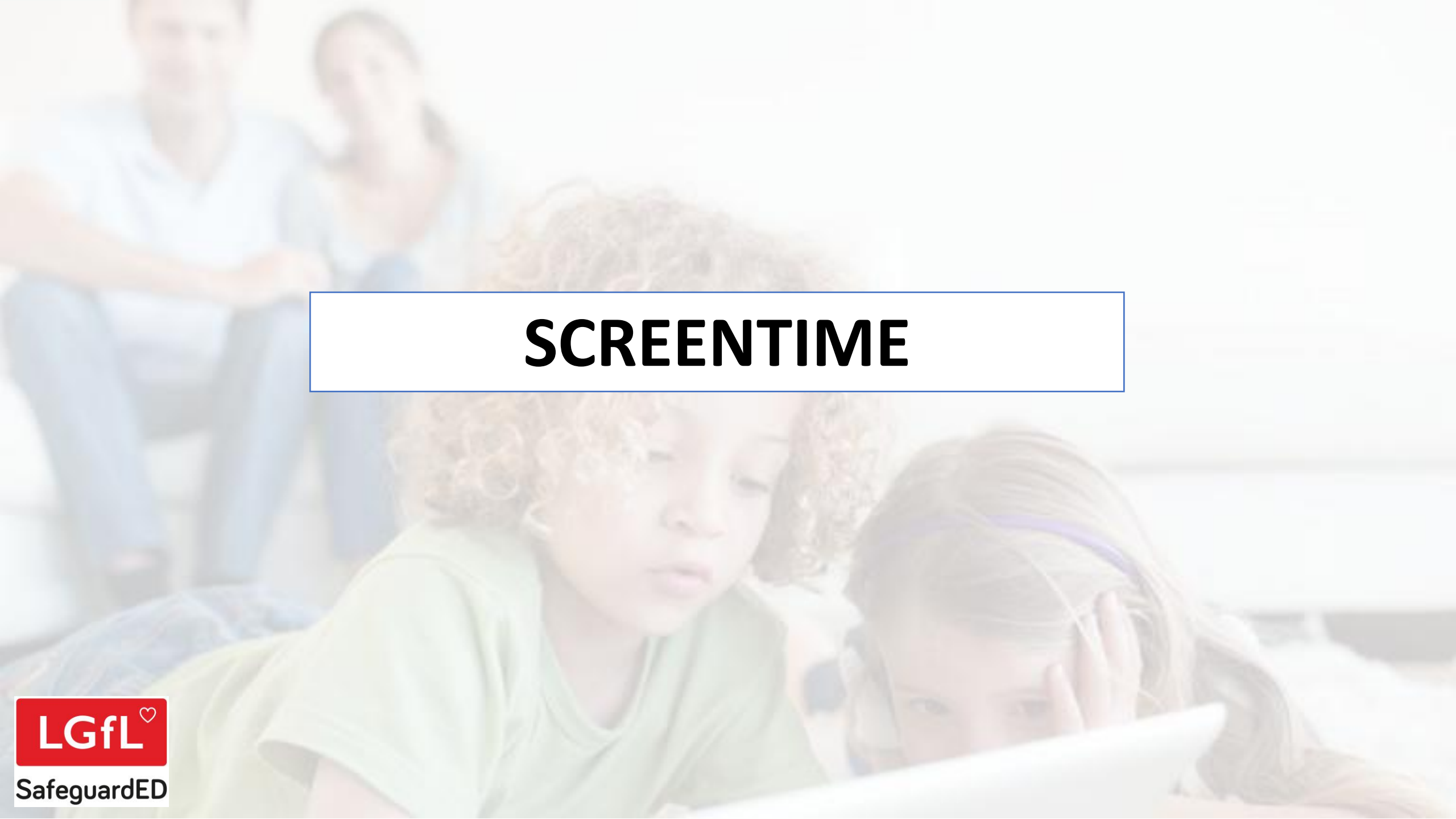
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Visit parentsafe.lgfl.net/ for additional advice and tips on settings and controls for all devices

REMEMBER

- As children get older, restrictions and controls you use will change, but only at a pace you feel is appropriate for your child, not pressure from your child *“because everyone else is allowed”*
- Content filters are never 100% effective, at some point your child may come across inappropriate or upsetting content, so *make time to talk regularly*





SCREENTIME

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What about **WHATSAPP**?

Do you know the **minimum age** to use this? What are the **risks**?



Unwanted contact

to contact somebody on WhatsApp, all you need is their phone number, which could expose you to unwanted messages or calls

Inappropriate content

messages are end-to-end encrypted which means that the content cannot be monitored. This means that your child could see or hear harmful or upsetting content e.g. pornography or violence.

Location sharing

live location feature means that your child could reveal their current location to others

Cyberbullying

children could be bullied, feel left out or deliberately excluded or removed from groups

Oversharing

privacy features, such as disappearing and 'view once' messages, might mean that your child feels safe to reveal private or risky information or images. However, there is always a risk that this could be copied and shared



What can you do?



WhatsApp
safety guide for
parents

internet
matters.org

13+
WhatsApp's
minimum age
in the UK

58%
Kids aged 3-17
who use
WhatsApp

37%
Kids under 13
who use
WhatsApp



5 tips to keep kids safe on WhatsApp

-  **1 Review privacy settings** WhatsApp has a range of privacy and security settings to keep users safe. Customise groups, app access, live location and more.
-  **2 Customise contacts** Show your child how to report and block unwanted contacts. Then, work with them to add their friends and family. Review and talk about their contacts regularly.
-  **3 Talk about personal information** Make sure your child understands what personal information is. Talk about the importance of keeping that information private on WhatsApp.
-  **4 Show them where to get support** If something goes wrong or they see something worrying on WhatsApp, make sure they know to come to you, and talk about other sources of support.
-  **5 Check in regularly** Once you've done all of the above, check in with them regularly to review settings and how they use WhatsApp.



Do you know the **DIFFERENCE** between an '**ONLINE**' **FRIEND** and a real one? How does this differ from your **CHILD'S VIEW**?

- Are you familiar with who they are in **contact** with whilst playing games?
- Have you asked about the **chat** facility?
- Do you know the **content** and **age restrictions** for these games?



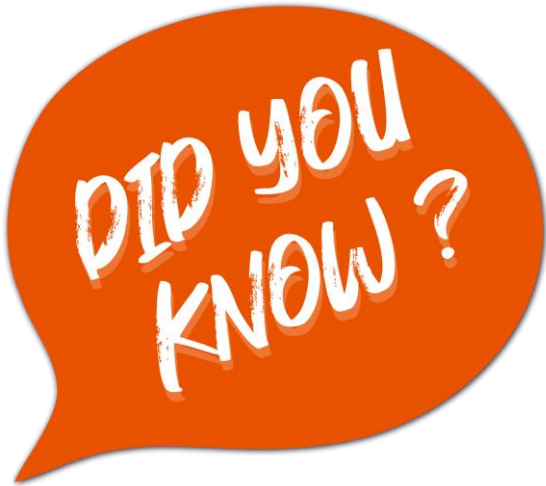
How can **YOU GET INVOLVED?**



- ASK what type of games your child enjoys – are they **age-appropriate**?
- PLAY games together - keep the tech in **shared spaces** rather than bedrooms
- TALK about **who they are playing** with - what **information** are they sharing?
- EXPLAIN what is/isn't **appropriate to share**, e.g. personal details to identify them/location
- AGREE how they will spend their **money** online
- DISCUSS what they would do if they were **bullied** online, and what steps to take
- DECIDE **how long is appropriate** to play in one session - how many sessions a day
- SETUP these restrictions in **parental settings** with your child

PEGI helps parents to make informed decisions when buying video games:

- The age rating confirms that the game content is appropriate for players of certain age
- It considers the age **suitability** of a game, **not the level of difficulty**



TWO LEVELS OF INFORMATION AS A GUIDE : THE PEGI AGE LABELS



THE CONTENT DESCRIPTORS



AGE REQUIREMENTS



Are **YOU** aware of the **MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT** for social media?

83% of parents of 3-17s are aware of a minimum age requirement to have a profile on social media apps

BUT ONLY
33% of parents knew the correct age requirement
(13 yrs)

More than a third (37%) say they would allow their child to have a profile on sites or apps before they had reached the minimum age.

What about YOUNG PEOPLE?

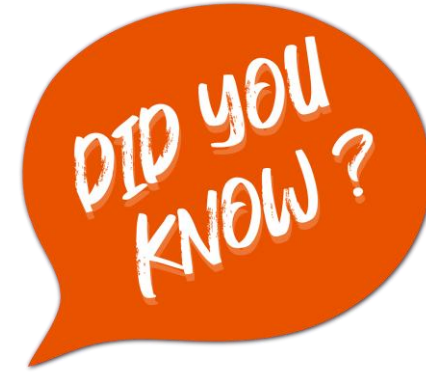
- Three quarters **(75%) of children are aware of minimum age** requirements
- A third **(33%) of 8-17 yr-olds admit to giving a fake age online** to access a new app/site
- Up to a **quarter had changed their date of birth** on their profile since initially setting it up
- **25% of 8-12 yr-olds were more likely to change it on Snapchat**



WHY is this **WORRYING?**

SECRET

Four in ten under-13s have a profile on social media apps or sites...



- YouTube/YouTube Kids (44%)
- WhatsApp (23%)
- TikTok (23%)
- The proportion of 8-9s with an Instagram profile increased from 8% in 2023 to 14% in 2024

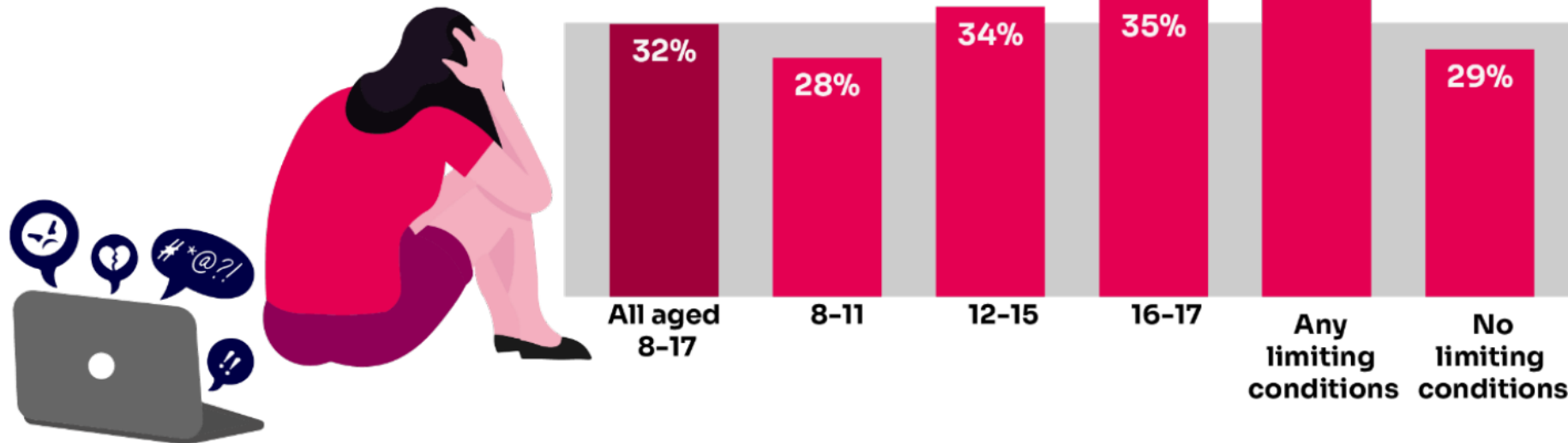
Despite there being a minimum age requirement of 13 for using most social media apps, over half of 3-12-year olds (55%) were reported as using at least one social media app or site, an increase on last year, when 51% of these children did so.



RISKS AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Summary of children's negative experiences

In the past 12 months, have you seen anything online that you found worrying or nasty in some way that you didn't like?



BUT Only 20% of parents report their child telling them about this in the same time frame.

Source: Children and parents: Media use and attitudes report

So what are the **RISKS**?

content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: **racism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation** (including fake news) and **conspiracy theories**.

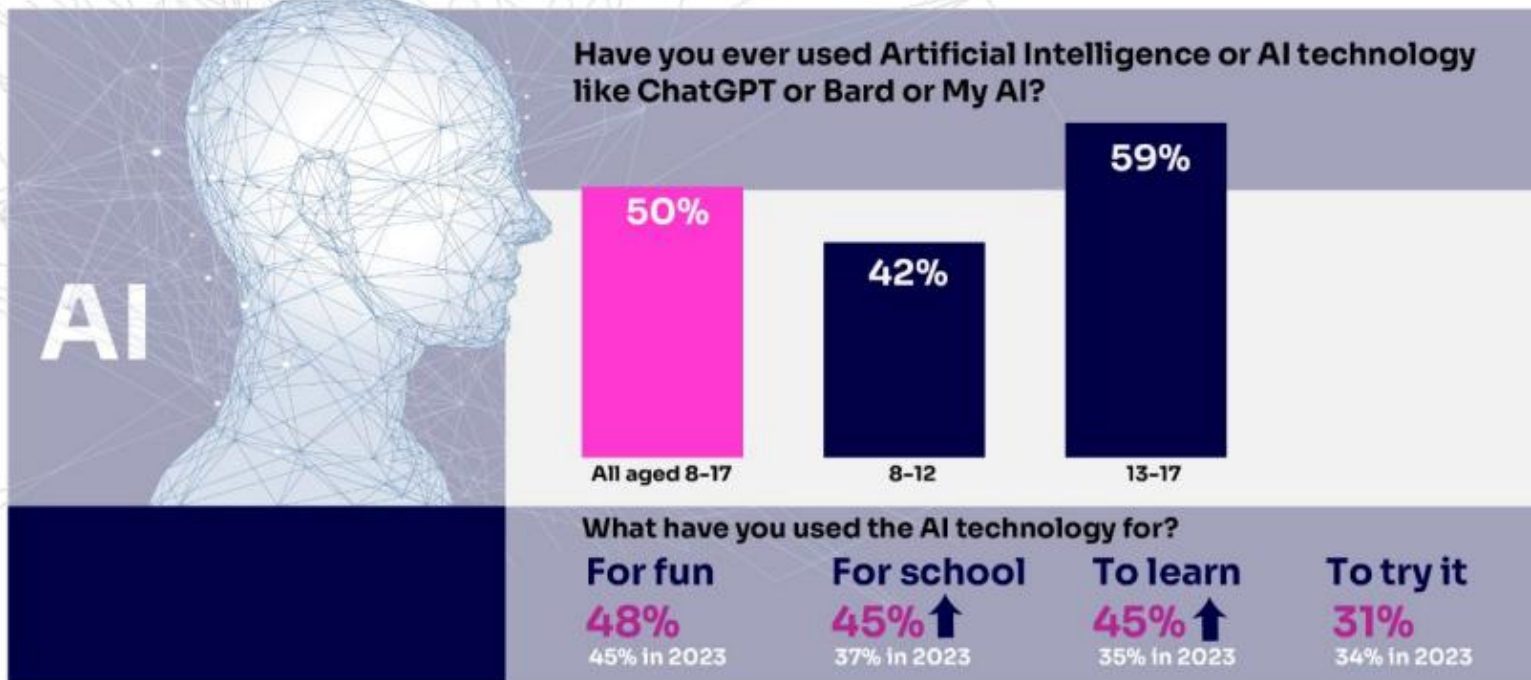
Updated to clarify misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories are safeguarding harms

contact: being subjected to harmful online **interaction** with other users; for example: peer to **peer pressure**, commercial **advertising** and **adults posing as children** or young adults with the intention to **exploit** them for **criminal, financial** or other purposes

conduct: online **behaviour** that increases the likelihood of, or **causes, harm**; sharing and receiving **explicit images**

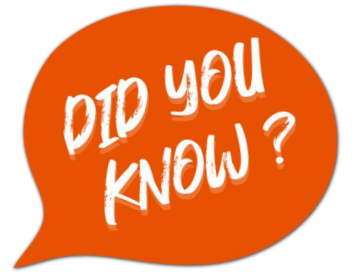
commerce: risks such as online **gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing** and or **financial scams**

Half of children say they use artificial intelligence (AI) tools



Childnet Cheat Sheet GenAI
PDF Format (844.65kB)

Livestreaming



Sixteen per cent of children livestream their own videos

- 3-9 year-olds (1 in 10)
- 10-12 year-olds (2 – 10)



Why does this **MATTER?**

Being safer while live streaming



- **Talk** to them about what they are sharing
- Use devices in **public spaces** e.g. lounge not bedroom
- Check privacy and safety **settings** on the app/site
- Be wary of **requests to chat in private**
- Know **Support and Reporting** functions

UK Reporting Helplines and Services for Children and Young People

Call 101 or 999 if
there is an
immediate risk of
harm to your child



NCA

Young people can
report concerns
about child sexual
abuse and
exploitation to NCA



Nude image of you online?
We can help take it down.

Report Remove

A free tool that allows
children to report
nude or sexual images
and videos of
themselves that they
think might have been
shared online



ChildLine

A free, private and
confidential service
where CYP can talk
about anything to a
trained counsellor,
online or on the
phone



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Go to reporting.lgfl.net to find out more

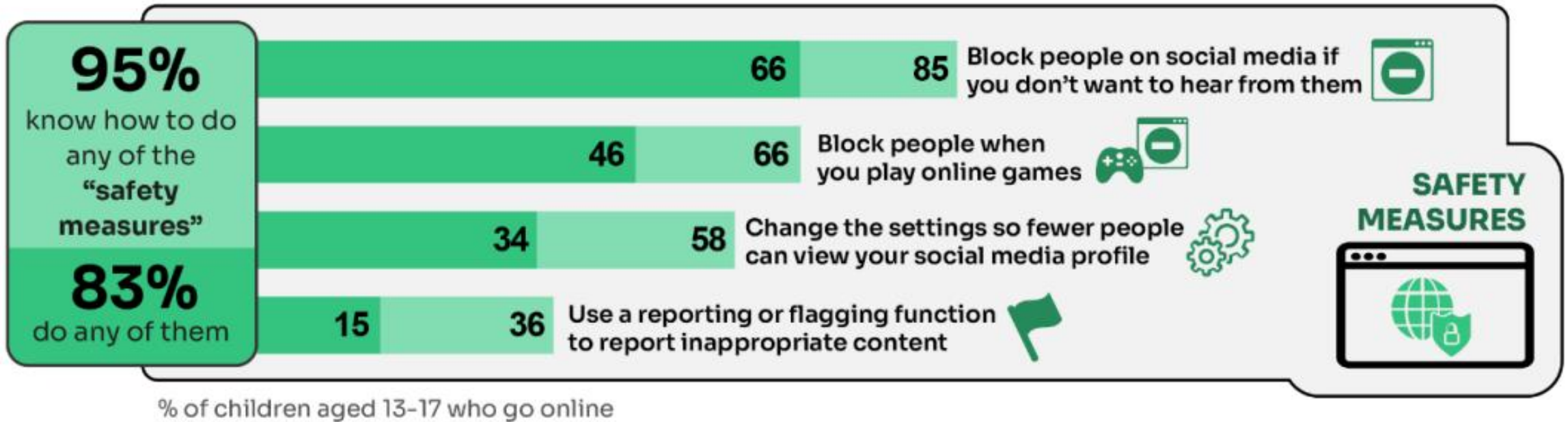


STAYING SAFE ONLINE AND REPORTING

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What do **YOUNG PEOPLE** do to **STAY SAFE ONLINE**?



Only 15% had used a reporting or flagging function
(36% were aware of these functions)

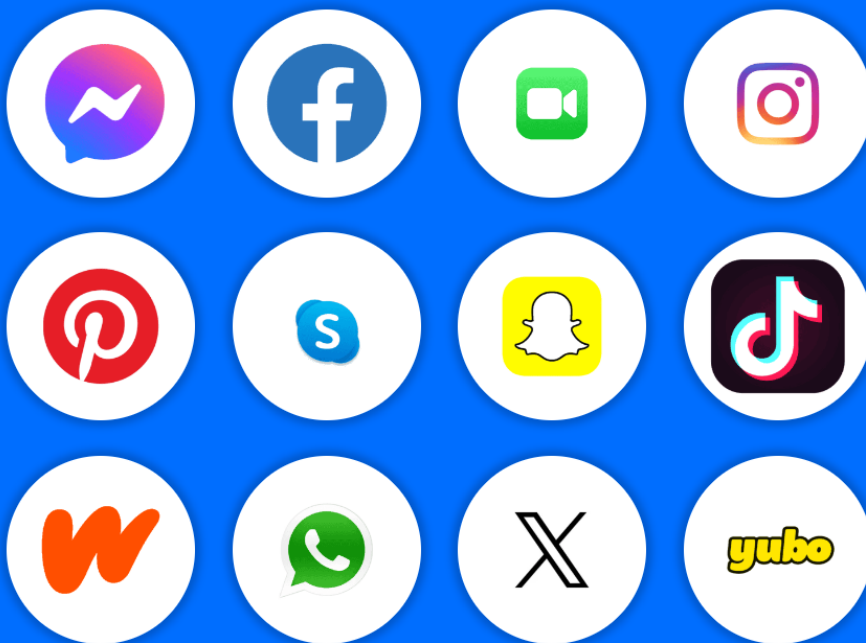


Do **YOU** know **HOW TO REPORT** to apps / sites?

Step-by-step Guides

Click on the guides for step-by-step instructions to set controls on popular devices.

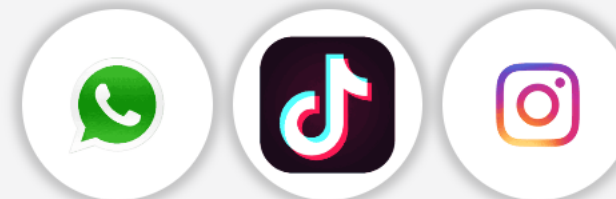
Social media



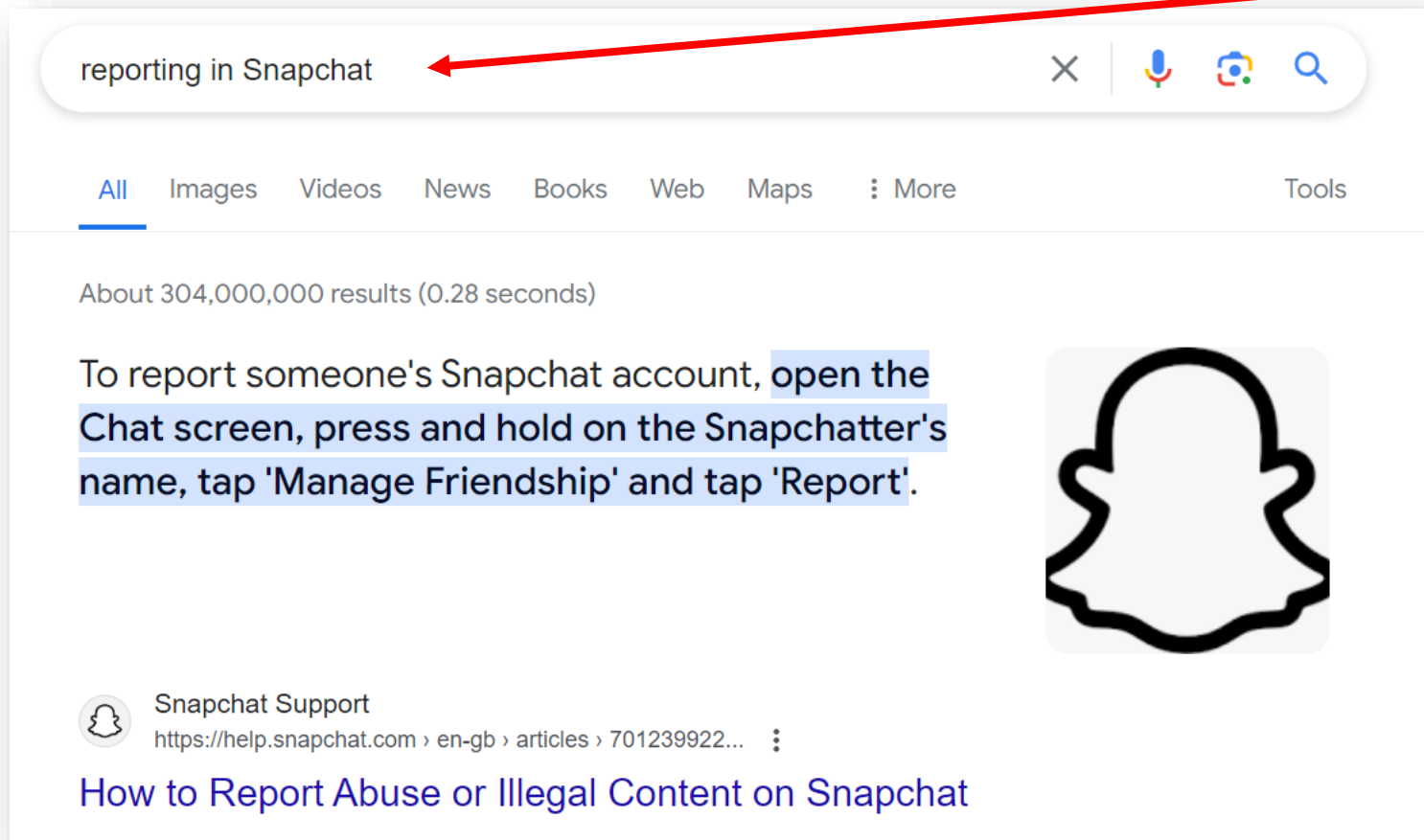
Internet Matters has helpful guides for social media apps and sites at

internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media

Popular Parental control guides



[Search our step by step guide](#)



A simple **Google search** with the site name, e.g. '**reporting in Snapchat**' will bring up the steps to take and signpost to the reporting page

Remember!



Before signing up to any app/site

check that your child meets the minimum age requirement

Remind your child to be cautious about accepting friend requests:

a real friend is someone they/you know in real life, not a 'friend' they met gaming or in a chat room.

Stress the importance of not sharing personal information with online 'friends'

Keep passwords confidential

Check their privacy settings

emphasise the importance of not sharing personal information with strangers

Report any content

e.g. a post, image or harmful, misleading or damaging comment

Reporting doesn't guarantee immediate removal

platforms assess reported content based on their rules and policies