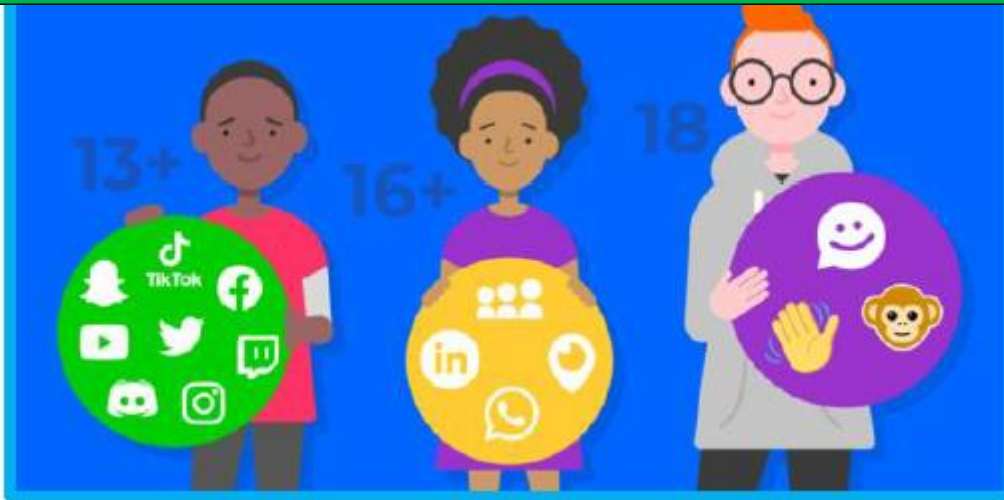




The Academy of Woodlands

Latest advice for Parents and Carers

Term 1 2024



As a parent it's important you know that all social networking platforms (or social networking apps, if on a smartphone) have age limits. Some social networks use technologies that may not be right for some ages or engage with communities that are made up of people much older than your child.

Online gaming is hugely popular with children and young people. Research conducted by OFCOM shows that gaming is still one of the top activities enjoyed by 5-16 year olds online, with many of them gaming via mobile devices and going online using their games console.

Online safety advice applies to online gaming as risks can be present in the game's content and chat features.

Social Media has continued to grow in popularity with both teens and tweens. According to a BBC Survey more than three quarters of younger children between 10 and 12 years old are using at least one social media network.

If your child is eager to start tweeting, posting or sharing but you feel they're not ready to use the likes of Facebook or Instagram, then there are a number of alternative social networks made for children that you can point them to. These offer child-friendly features like games and contests but also give you a chance to use them as teaching tool to get them sharing safely.

Ultimately, these social networks give children a safer environment where they can share their experiences and engage with friends they know.

What are age ratings?

Regulated by PEGI, this means that you need to make sure your child is old enough to buy or play them, but also to watch films and tv shows.

Age rating information is shown on the back of the game case if you buy it in a shop and should be visible somewhere on the screen if you're downloading it.

While most games are suitable for players of all ages, others are only suitable for older children and young teenagers. A specific portion of games on the market contains content that is only appropriate for an adult audience

It's important to remember that games are given ratings for a reason – they might be scary, violent or show other content which is only appropriate for grown-ups. Most online chat parts of the game allow children to talk and message others directly, age ratings will not restrict the type of conversation or language used.

What are the risks of an underage social networking account?

- Many sites include an instant message function that allows private conversations between site members.
- Most social networking sites have an app version available, meaning your child will have access to the social network from their smartphone or tablet. Some app versions of social networks use the location of the phone.
- Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may spread.
- It isn't easy to take back information that has been posted – and can be impossible if it's already been shared.
- Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are. Chatrooms and forums can connect people who are complete strangers and can be unmoderated.
- Chatrooms and forums are some of the places online groomers go to connect with children. They can also be places where people use a lot of sexual language and engage in online flirting. This is sometimes done through video chat programs.



Parental controls

[Parental controls](#) allows you to block and filter upsetting or inappropriate content. They work across your WiFi, phone network, individual apps and devices.

Parental controls can help you to:

- plan what time of day your child can go online and how long for
- create content filters to block apps that may have [inappropriate content](#)
- manage the content different family members can see.

Would you like to know more about online safety?

[Free online safety course for Parents](#)
Presented by Myleene Klass



In this exclusive FREE course, follow Myleene as she takes you through online safety risks for each age group, and how to tackle them.

[uk safer internet centre](#) for information and guidance around gaming content.

Advise on how to keep your child safe online and using [Parent controls](#) from CEOP or how to use the parental control settings on [consoles](#), handheld devices and operating systems for PC and Mac from PEGI.

Advise from [PEGI](#) on age ratings

Further online safety advice from the [NSPCC](#)

Safety net for helpful information and [guides](#)