

# The Wilnecote School Safeguarding Newsletter

Welcome to the 1st edition of our Safeguarding Newsletter, it is our aim to share this Safeguarding Newsletter every half-term to all parents/carers, which will be sent via email and will also be published on the School website.

Our objective of this edition is to provide you with the most up-to-date and relevant assistance and guidance on matters that we believe will be significant to you and your family. This edition introduces safeguarding at The Wilnecote School, online safety hints & tips, an introduction to PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education), dangers of vaping, sources of mental health support and guidance on Early Help on how they support families.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you that all of our staff received Level 1 Safeguarding Training in September 2023, and new staff members that join the school will also undergo this training. This is a statutory requirement outlined by the DfE and is underpinned by Keeping children safe in education 2023.

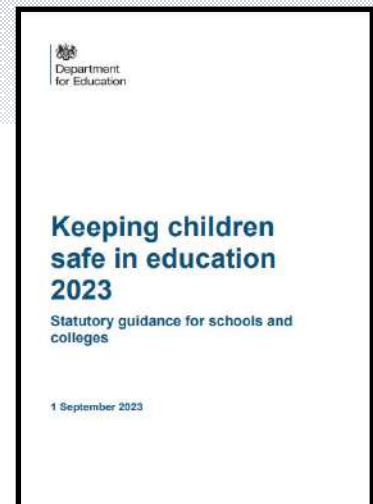
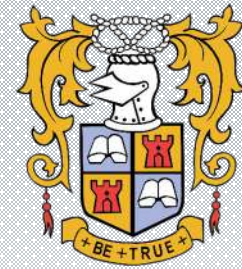
## Safeguarding at The Wilnecote School

This is the perfect opportunity to bring your attention to our child protection and safeguarding arrangements at The Wilnecote School. This is a crucial aspect and we approach it with utmost seriousness. While our primary goal as a school is to support our students in achieving their best, we acknowledge that certain circumstances, whether within or outside of the school, can impact their well-being and hinder their educational experience. In rare instances, students may be deemed at risk of significant harm, and it is our duty to intervene. Our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which can be accessed on our website, outlines our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for our students. It also emphasizes that our students are aware of the presence of supportive adults within the school who are ready to assist them if they have any concerns regarding their safety or the safety of others. To fulfill these objectives, we have designated safeguarding leads among our staff members. These individuals serve as the primary points of contact for students, parents, staff, or anyone in the community who may have concerns about the well-being of our students. Each of these staff members has undergone comprehensive training on how to address child protection concerns and will work closely with the students and their families to handle emerging issues with sensitivity and confidentiality.

In certain circumstances, it may be essential to involve Staffordshire Children's Advice Service Team when there is a concern for a student's safety. In such rare instances, we adhere to the guidelines provided by the Local Authority on how to proceed with making a referral. For a comprehensive understanding of this process, please refer to the Staffordshire Safeguarding Adults and Children's Board website at <https://staffsscb.org.uk>. Throughout the entirety of this procedure, we maintain close collaboration with the student, their family, and Children's Social Care to address and resolve the identified concerns.

### What is PSHE?

PSHE aims to provide children with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves happy, healthy and safe, as well as to prepare them for life and work. PSHE aims to give children the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives.



### PSHE Update:

The following topics have been covered this half-term during tutor time and KS4 PSHE lessons:

**Year 7:** Safety inside & outside of school. Career aspirations. Tobacco, caffeine & alcohol. Vaping

**Year 8:** Drugs and alcohol. Food champions. Careers and life choices. Vaping

**Year 9:** Substance use, alcohol and the law. Career goals. Vaping

**Year 10:** Social Media. Mental health. Financial decisions. Drugs, alcohol and the law. Vaping

**Year 11:** Further education applications. Gangs, drugs, alcohol and law. Vaping

**School Safeguarding Team:** Mr Simpson, Mr Foskett, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Ager, Mr Herbert, Miss Julius & Mr Croydon

**Staffordshire Children Advice Support Service— 0800 111 8007**

You can call Staffordshire Children Advice Support Service as parent/carer or as a member of the public. If you have any concerns about a child you can call this number for support if you feel a child is at serious risk or harm.



## LGBTQ+ Group

As a school we pride ourselves on being inclusive and providing a supportive environment for all students. As such, we recently relaunched our LGBTQ+ group which meet every Thursday breaktime in the library with Miss Julius. This runs as a drop in session so students can come along every week or just every so often, everyone is welcome so please encourage your children to come along and have a chat. Miss Julius supports all students who can check in at point in the week.

## Dangers of vaping

At The Wilnecote School we regularly talk about the dangers of vaping to our students. The vast majority of our students would never try a vape but we need to be mindful that some students experiment and we ask parents/carers to be vigilant at home and to support your children. It is illegal to purchase a vape under the age of 18 and it is illegal for anyone to vape on school site, ultimately if a student makes the decision to vape on school site then serious sanctions will be actioned as per the schools Behaviour Policy.

Page 3 provides a poster explaining vaping in more detail, highlighting the risks and dangers. As a school we can support both students and their families. If you have concerns about addiction then speak to your GP, for additional support please contact the Pastoral Team who can support your child and help complete referrals for professional advice.

## Online Safety Policy

At The Wilnecote School we encourage student engagement with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as we believe that it enables them to learn, communicate and explore the world in new ways. Many young people are now skilled in using computers, games consoles, mobile phones and tablet computers. However, with this new technology we also acknowledge that there are also new risks.

We believe that everyone in our school community is responsible for the welfare and safety of children and it is therefore crucial that all stakeholders understand what these risks are and how we can all work together to enjoy these new technologies safely.

Online safety is essentially about creating a safe environment when using ICT. This includes the use of the internet and social networking sites. Our school aim is to prevent safeguarding issues, including cyber bullying, as well as detailing how we respond to online safety issues when they emerge. Our new updated Acceptable Use Policy can be found on Page 8, which outlines our student expectations when using ICT resources and services within school. All students will receive the updated policy in January and will be expected sign the agreement.

## Online Safety Weekly Updates

Please look out for our Online Safety Hints & Tips, these will be sent directly via email (ParentMail) each week and are available on the School website.

The following guides can be found over the next few pages:

- Live Streaming
- Setting boundaries around gaming
- TikTok
- EAFC24



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

### WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be **disposable** (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or **rechargeable** (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

### LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

### POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

### UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

### ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 5 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

### WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

### UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

### SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

### VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

## Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65809924>

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming involves broadcasting and watching videos online in real time, often on social media or via platforms like YouTube and Twitch. Viewers can interact through comments, chats and reactions during the broadcast: such instant engagement makes this an exciting way to share experiences, learn from others and build digital communities. Despite the many positives, live streaming also creates a potential platform for unsuitable content and poses some risks to children: it's essential to keep privacy and safety in mind and comply with each site or app's age restrictions.

**AGE RESTRICTION**

13+  
16+  
18+

Age varies by platform

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### LACK OF AGE VERIFICATION

Despite their age restrictions, some platforms don't require proof of age at sign up – meaning that anyone can register for an account (and potentially pretend to be older or younger than they actually are). In many cases, this means that young live streamers can never be totally certain exactly who they are broadcasting to and who is engaging with their live stream.

### DISCLOSING PERSONAL INFO

A characteristic of live streaming is the ability for videos to be instantly shared worldwide. Without the correct privacy settings enabled, a child could inadvertently reveal personal information or their location, making them vulnerable to online predators or identity theft. It's wise to regularly check the privacy settings (and what data is being shared) on any apps your child has signed up for.

### ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN

As the video streams are live, children might encounter (or inadvertently share) inappropriate content. Most live-streaming apps have rules to prevent this and monitor their services, also providing report buttons where content can be flagged for review. It may not be dealt with instantly, however, meaning that your child could be further exposed to harmful content during a live stream.

### UNAUTHORISED RECORDINGS

Each live streaming platform stores completed videos for different periods (Twitch saves broadcasts for 60 days, for example, while Facebook and YouTube remove them only at the creator's request). Deleting a video, though, doesn't always stop it from being shared: in some cases, streams have been illegally recorded (or screenshots taken) by certain viewers and redistributed on other sites.

### ROGUE CONTENT CREATORS

Children can also watch other people's live streams, which could potentially contain anything at any time (such as nudity, drug use or profanity). Most apps claim to monitor live streams and will stop any that don't adhere to their guidelines – but with millions of streams per day, it's complicated to regulate them all, so children could be exposed to inappropriate content without parents knowing.

### DANGER OF GROOMING

There are increasing reports of children being coerced into performing "suggestive acts" by strangers on some live-streaming apps. Due to the lack of verification required for certain apps, almost anyone can sign up to these services (including anonymously or under a fake identity). It's vital, therefore, to ensure the correct safety measures are in place before your child begins live streaming.



## Advice for Parents & Carers

### PUT PRIVACY FIRST

Through the streaming app's settings, switch your child's account to 'private', so only their friends and followers can see their broadcasts. You could also turn off the live chat, shielding your child from any upsetting comments – although viewers' feedback is often seen as an integral part of the fun. Identify any nearby items (such as school uniforms or visible landmarks) that could give away your child's location.

### MANAGE MULTISTREAMING

Some apps and sites let users stream their content through multiple social media platforms at once. A broadcast on SteamYard, for example, can be shared on YouTube, Twitch, X and Facebook if the accounts are linked. The privacy settings can differ on each of these, so we'd suggest only streaming via one platform at a time to maintain greater control over who's watching your child's videos.

### GET INVOLVED YOURSELF

Research suggests a significant number of streams show a child on their own, often in a supposed safe space like their bedroom. If your child wants to live stream, ask if you could be present because you're interested in how it works. You could even set up your own account to gain a more detailed knowledge of what your child talks about in their live streams – and who they're broadcasting to.

### TALK ABOUT LIVE STREAMING

Try to start with positives before discussing potential risks. You could ask which live streaming apps your child likes and how they use them. Do they just watch streams or create their own? Explain why it's unwise to reveal personal information while streaming (even to friends). If you feel your child's too young for live streams, explain your reasoning to them and perhaps agree to review this decision in the future.

### CONSIDER THEIR ONLINE REPUTATION

As the broadcasts are live, it often causes the misconception among young people that whatever happens in their video simply 'vanishes' once the stream ends. However, videos can stay online indefinitely or be recorded by other users. It's important that your child understands what they do and say in a live stream could potentially damage their online reputation and, quite possibly, be seen by prospective future employers, colleges or universities.

### Meet Our Expert

Rhodi Smyth is Head of Digital Learning at Thomas's Kensington, London. Recognised in the EdTech 50 UK Awards Yearbook 2021/22 for his efforts in the digital transformation of Cubitt Town Primary School and Tower Hamlets, he is also a Google for Education Certified Trainer and guest lecturer at University College London on the integration of technology across the curriculum.



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Source: <https://www.itw.org.uk/media/239392/distribution-of-captures-of-live-streamed-child-sexual-abuse-final.pdf>

# Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

## PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

## ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

## AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

## DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary; emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

18  
CENSORED

## FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

## ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

## TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

## BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

## Meet Our Expert

Daniel Upson is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 16 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.



Source: <https://hipol.app/about/privacy.html>

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-16 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18  
CENSORED

### DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

### IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

### ADDICTIVE NATURE

TikTok can be addictive, especially for young people: compulsive repeated use can interfere with sleep patterns and be a distraction from other activities. The platform recently introduced default usage time limits of 60 and 100 minutes for new members under 18 (in the UK, children with TikTok average 102 minutes per day on the app), but these restrictions can easily be removed in the settings.

### TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the "TikTok Now" feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

### MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-16s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

### LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

### Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about EA SPORTS FC 24

After two decades of holding the official FIFA licence, EA Sports' phenomenally successful football video game series has embarked on a solo run at goal. This season's iteration marks the debut appearance of a new name and branding, but don't let those fool you – EA Sports FC 24 is still a very similar proposition to last year's FIFA 23. Popular features such as Ultimate Team remain a big focus, meaning that potentially costly in-game spending is still among the line-up of risks that parents and carers should be aware of.



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### RECURRING RELEASES

EA Sports FC 24 effectively picks up the FIFA template – meaning that after a year, we can expect EA Sports FC 25 to hit the shelves. Updates between versions of the FIFA franchise tended to be minor, but young fans of the game are almost certain to want the new edition in around 12 months' time, so they can keep playing with updated team kits, players and squad lists.

### OFFENSIVE VOICE CHAT

FIFA 23 introduced cross-platform play, and EA Sports FC 24 goes a step further with Clubs, Seasons and Ultimate Team cooperative modes across PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and S, and PC. That's exciting news for youngsters who love to play with friends online – but connecting a much wider audience does potentially open lines of communication between children and far older online gamers.

### IN-GAME PURCHASES

In FIFA, Ultimate Team proved to be a profitable innovation for developers Electronic Arts (EA), and is now found in many of their other titles. Players spend in-game currency to recruit better footballers for their team, but this process can take a frustratingly long time – so young fans may be tempted to skip the grind by paying real-world cash to unlock that coveted star midfielder.

### ULTIMATE TEAM SCAMMERS

Since the mode was introduced, Ultimate Team has been a target of scammers who attempt to coax players into buying or selling outside the terms of service from EA and console manufacturers. This shady practice can lead to accounts being banned and in-game items being lost. In some cases, young gamers have also been hoodwinked into handing over their payment details to the fraudsters.

### POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

Just like real-life football, EA Sports FC 24 offers a thrilling, dynamic blend of tactical awareness and skill that fans find absolutely engrossing. Among younger players in particular, this could lead to identifiers of a gaming disorder as they plead for "just one more game" before bedtime or spend practically all weekend playing more matches to earn additional Ultimate Team packs.



## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CONTROL SPENDING

If your child enjoys Ultimate Team mode, check that your payment details aren't linked to their account. Bundles of FC Points (the game's currency) start at just £1, so multiple payments can easily slip under the radar. You could consider setting your child an in-game allowance, perhaps through a prepaid card, which will help them to realise that online spending has a real-world effect.

### DEFEND AGAINST SCAMMERS

EA does contact players via email (although not to ask for usernames or passwords, so watch out for that scam tactic), but never through the game itself – so be wary of incoming messages and consider blocking and reporting suspected spam. Your child should avoid buying coins (the in-game currency) from external sites: it could end with them losing their money and being banned from the game.

### AVOID EXTRA TIME

Many parents of young football-oriented gamers worry about their child playing too much EA Sports FC. There's now also a companion mobile app, which can also often provide another indicator that a child is struggling to disengage from the game. You could initiate discussions around set hours of play – or take stronger action by utilising the parental controls on their console or phone.

### SHOW TOXIC THAT THE RED CARD

Playing EA Sports FC 24 with friends is highly enjoyable, but if competitive types start to turn toxic online, it can ruin everyone's fun. You could occasionally listen in on the voice chat of your child's game for any warning signs that things may be about to boil over. This goes double when playing online with strangers: voice contact with unknown players can be turned off in the game's settings.

### CELEBRATE THE VARIETY

Ultimate Team may be the game's 'star player', but there's plenty more to do in EA Sports FC 24 – including modes which allow access to all of football's big names without needing to spend money on packs to unlock them. This new version of the game includes even more women's teams, marking another step forward in representation: an important subject to discuss and celebrate with children.

### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site [CCRecon.com](http://CCRecon.com) and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. Always eager to test out the latest apps, games and online trends, he's also a parent who understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



Sources: <https://www.windowscentral.com/youngsters-spend-over-6000-11a-4ba-highlighting-predatory-game-deals-02/>, <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item-detail/336303x-behaviours-gaming-disorders>, <https://www.eurogamer.net/18-europead-continues-call-for-better-regulation-of-loot-boxes-following-new-report>

### Acceptable Online and Social Networking Use

The use of The Wilnecote Schools ICT resources and services is a facility granted, at the school's discretion, to students. This AUP is essential for managing and sustaining the integrity of The Wilnecote School network.

#### Student Agreement

- I understand that the school will monitor my use of the systems, devices and digital communications.
- I will keep my username and password safe and secure - I will not share it, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password.
- I understand that I'm responsible for what happens on my user area. I will never allow another student access it.
- I will immediately report any unpleasant or inappropriate material or messages that makes me feel uncomfortable when I see it on-line or on a digital device.
- I will not upload, download or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others.
- I will not try (unless I have permission) to make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work.
- I will not access, copy, remove or alter any other user's files, without the owner's knowledge and permission.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.
- I will not open any hyperlinks in emails or any attachments to emails, unless I know and trust the person / organisation who sent the email.
- I will not install or attempt to install or store programmes of any type on any school device, nor will I try to alter computer settings.
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not try to download copies.
- I will always be polite when communicating with other students online.
- I will not use abusive or strong language towards others, which may be humiliating and hurtful. I will not use any communication device whether provided by the school or personally owned to bully or harass others.
- I will not post or distribute images or videos of others without their permission.
- I will not post or send inappropriate images or videos of myself or others to anyone.
- I will not post offensive or inappropriate comments about the school or members of staff.
- I will not try and contact staff using my personal account.
- I will be aware of "stranger danger", when communicating online.
- I understand that my parents/carers are responsible for my use of systems, devices and digital communications outside of school. I'm aware that any incidents of misuse which are brought to the attention of the school and are deemed to cause harm or potential harm to myself, other people (students and teachers) and/or the school may be dealt with in an appropriate manner by the school and could involve a report being made to the Police.

#### **Violating the Acceptable Use Policy may result in:**

- Temporarily or permanently banned from using the Internet/network
- Sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy
- Legal action including criminal prosecution under appropriate British laws
- In order to ensure smooth system operations, the System Administrator has the authority to monitor all accounts. Every effort will be made to protect privacy and security in this process.

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



### 1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

### 2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?

### 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

### 7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

### 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

### 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

### 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

### 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

### 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

## Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## Sources of Information and Support

Your GP  
 Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/v>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>



## Help and support for Mental Health

If you find yourself or your child struggling with mental well-being and facing difficulties in coping, it is important to remember that you are not alone and assistance is readily available. It is possible for anyone to experience challenges with their mental health, regardless of who they are. We can offer support and guidance within school, both the Pastoral & Safeguarding teams are available. Also, depending on circumstances, there are various avenues through which you can seek support for mental well-being. For instance, you can reach out to your GP, get in touch with a helpline, or consult with a counselor or therapist. Provided below are a few organizations that can serve as a helpful starting point. Remember, you do not have to face this alone! **These are all available during the Christmas break.**

NSPCC— Call 0808 800 500, [nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)

Mind— Call 0300 123 3393, [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

Shout—Text SHOUT to 85258 (24/7 text service), [giveusashout.org](http://giveusashout.org)

Samaritans—Call 116 123, [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

YoungMind—Text TM to 85258, [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

Calm—Call 0800 58 58 58, [thecalmzone.net](http://thecalmzone.net)

Papyrus—Call 0800 068 4141, [papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org)

Page 9 provides guidance to parents/carers on supporting your children's mental health

## Early Help Support

### What is early help?

Early help refers to any service that provides assistance to children and families at the earliest signs of difficulties. Early help services encompass a range of support options, such as parenting support, play and activity groups, emotional health and wellbeing support, and communication and language support. These services, also known as early intervention services, are typically offered by local authorities. The specific type of support provided can vary greatly, with many services offering information, advice, and guidance to families. This support can be delivered on an individual basis or within a group setting. Additionally, early help services may assist families in finding solutions to specific challenges they may be facing.

### Who is early help for?

There are early help services for parents, children or whole families. All early help is voluntary - families do not have to participate if they don't want to. Early help could provide support at any stage in a child or young person's life. Some are more likely to need this support than others, such as: Children in or leaving care, Children with disabilities, Young parents, Families facing abuse and conflict and Low-income families.

Children and families have the opportunity to advantage of early assistance services within their community. Both our Pastoral & Safeguarding Teams work very closely with the Staffordshire Early Help Team and we can support families who require support, either giving advice or supporting the referral process. For further information about Staffordshire Early Help please visit [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-children-and-families/Familiesfirstpartners/yourearlyhelpteam.aspx](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-children-and-families/Familiesfirstpartners/yourearlyhelpteam.aspx)

## Finally...

We recently had a visit from the Community Academies Trust Director of Safeguarding and Behaviour who commented on Safeguarding at the school, *"The cornerstones of effective safeguarding are in place and key strategies and systems are in place to ensure students are safe in the school"*. Also, *"All students confirmed they have a 'go-to' staff member if they were worried about themselves or a friend."*

## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

From everyone in The Wilnecote School Safeguarding School, we hope you have a wonderful festive break, spending valuable time with friends and family. Stay Safe!



School Safeguarding Team: Mr Simpson, Mr Foskett, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Ager, Mr Herbert, Miss Julius & Mr Croydon

Staffordshire Children Advice Support Service— 0800 111 8007

You can call Staffordshire Children Advice Support Service as parent/carer or as a member of the public. If you have any concerns about a child you can call this number for support if you feel a child is at serious risk or harm.