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Dear Parents / Carers

In our modern world, many people enjoy using Social Media to share their news and thoughts, we also know that many of our children enjoy playing games online, including Fortnite, which allow children to communicate with others that you or they may not know.
As a school, we are conscious we need to work together with Parents and Carers to safeguard and protect all our children and the staff online. We regularly talk to all the children about how they can help to keep themselves safe online and we have sent information to Parents / Carers. You will find links to this on our website.

It has come to our attention that there are an increasing number of instances whereby children at Bleakhouse are using Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and other social media sites to upload images and videos of themselves and/or their friends at school. Children are also viewing images and memes on such sites as TikTok and YouTube, often they are exposed to inappropriate sexualised, violent or racist language, which they then repeat in school. These instances may be logged by the school.

May I remind you that the minimum age for Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, Wink and Instagram are all 13 years old and WhatsApp 16 years old. Games like Grand Theft Auto are 18+

I would urge you to monitor closely your child's mobile phone, smartphone, tablets and computers to ensure that they are not involved in or being subjected to any form of on-line bullying or danger. Monitoring should be extended to their participation in on-line gaming and ensuring they are only playing age appropriate games. We are aware of some pupils using inappropriate language as a result of playing these games and communicating using the above sites.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all children to hand in mobile phones each morning, should they bring one to school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr. J. Bates
Headteacher

Digital safety at a glance

Guidance for parents of 8-10-year-olds

Use this quick tips guide to stay on top of your child's online safety needs.

Tech use, issues and tips

Learn about common experiences at this age and what you can do to keep your child safe online as they grow.

96%
watch videos online

82%
send messages or make video/voice calls

67%
play games online

Source: Ofcom 2023

Too much screen time

Too much screen time is the online harm most experienced at this age, increasing as children grow; **71% of parents worry about this.**

Source: Internet Matters tracker survey

Set time limits for devices but also help kids experience a range of activities to create and learn to support their wellbeing.

In-game and in-app spending

In-game and in-app spending is the **second-most common online harm among 8-10s,** increasing with age. However, parent concern about this decreases as children grow.

Source: Internet Matters tracker survey

Review purchase settings and parental controls in apps, games and online stores to set limits, then talk about why they're important.

Viewing violent content

Viewing violent content is the third-most common online harm at this age, and **67% of parents worry about it.**

Source: Internet Matters tracker survey

Set parental controls and restrictions on video games, videos and websites children access. Talk to them about why some content is not appropriate.

Learn about these issues and more at **internetmatters.org**

Practical tips to keep 8-10s safe online

Set parental controls on popular apps

▶ YouTube

1. Set up YouTube Kids or a Supervised Account.
2. Use timers to manage screen time.
3. Turn off watch history to limit suggested videos.

NETFLIX

1. Create a Kids Profile so they have access to age appropriate content.
2. Customise their profile's maturity rating.
3. Turn off autoplay on series to help manage screen time.

WhatsApp

1. WhatsApp age minimum is 16 in the UK, so review privacy settings.
2. Disable live location and who can contact your child.
3. Familiarise yourself with all features.

See all parental controls guides at **internetmatters.org/controls**

Are they gaming with others online?

- Set up controls in-game and on consoles
- Talk about keeping personal information private
- Discuss positive behaviour online
- Search **'top internet manners'** for more

Get personalised advice straight to your inbox

Want support to stay on top of your kids' digital lives? Together, we've got this, with our free personalised family digital toolkit. By completing the form you'll get:

- Age-specific checklists and guides
- Safety information on the latest apps and platforms
- Resources to tackle online concerns by age
- Interactive tools to encourage discussions on key topics

Scan the QR code or go to **internetmatters.org /toolkit**

Make online safety a part of their everyday

Conversations to have

Talk about:

- What they're watching; what do they like about it?
- What apps/games they like; what would they like to try?
- How being online makes them feel; what signs tell them they need a break?

See more at **internetmatters.org**

Tools to explore together

Build digital skills and play together with:

- The Online Together Project: an interactive quiz with discussion points to challenge stereotypes and hate online.
- Find the Fake: a series of quizzes to help teach children how to recognise and tackle misinformation online.
- Digital Matters: complete the interactive stories with your child to help them learn key online safety skills.

Go to **internetmatters.org/advice** for more