



Sheldwich Primary School

Little Hedgehogs Pre-School

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Garrett BA(Hons), MA, PGCE, NPQH
Lees Court Road, Sheldwich, Faversham, Kent ME13 0LU
Tel: 01795 532779 Fax: 01795 532682
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14th December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Sheldwich Primary School. Online Safety is taught to all pupils and our curriculum empowers pupils to understand and be aware how they can stay safe and behave appropriately online but we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you.

Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep themselves safe and behave appropriately online. It is important that we are all vigilant when children are using the internet and act to ensure they are protected from people who may pose a risk to them. Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to illegal, unwanted or unpleasant content, comments or activity online and there are steps you can take at home to minimize this risk.

What can parents/carers do to help children keep safe online?

Ground Rules

- Discuss together as a family how the internet will be used in your house. Consider what information should be kept private (such as personal information, photos in school uniform etc). Ensure your children know the risks of accepting friend requests from strangers online and make sure you know what your child is doing online, much like you would offline.
- Discuss using strong passwords with your child so they understand how they can protect their online accounts and talk about keeping passwords safe e.g. not sharing them with anyone or using the same password for several accounts. If your child's account is 'hacked' or compromised then make sure they change their password and report any concerns or suspicious activity. For more advice on using strong passwords visit [this website](#).
- Consider locating your child's computers and laptops in a family area but be aware that children access the internet on mobile phones, games consoles and tablets so use can't always be supervised.
- Be especially aware of setting rules relating to your child's use of any apps or devices which allow voice or video chat. Childnet have useful information for young people about using webcams safely www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/video-chat-and-webcams

Online Safety

- Install antivirus software, secure your internet connection and use 'Parental Control' functions for computers, mobile phones and games consoles to block unsuitable content or contact from unknown people. Research different parental control software and tools available for your home and select the tools that are most suitable to you, your child and the technology in your home. Visit sites such as [Internet Matters](#), [Safer Internet](#) and [Get Safe Online](#) for safety information and advice about parental controls on consoles and devices as well as how to report concerns.

Make sure you read any parental guidance and safety recommendations (including age requirements – most popular social networking sites and apps are only for users aged 13+, 16+ or 18+, though it is easy to bypass the age restriction) for any apps or websites before allowing your child to use them - visit www.net-aware.org.uk

Always remember that parental control tools are not always 100% effective and sometimes unsuitable content can get past them, so don't rely on them alone to protect your child.



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Popular Social Media Sites

- **Instagram** – Allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters and organized by hashtags and geographical tagging. Posts can be shared publicly or with preapproved followers. You must be **at least 13 years old** to create an account.
- **Facebook** – Allows users, who sign-up for free profiles, to connect with friends, work colleagues or people they don't know, online. It allows users to share pictures, music, videos, and articles, as well as their own thoughts and opinions with however many people they like. You must be **at least 13 years old** to create an account.
- **WhatsApp** – Allows users to send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other content. The user agreement requires users to be **at least 16 years old**.
- **Snapchat** – Any picture, video, or message - aka snap - you send by default is made available to the receiver for only a short time before it becomes inaccessible. Snapchat was initially focused on private, person-to-person photo sharing, but you can now use it for sending videos, live video chatting, messaging, creating caricature-like 'Bitmoji' avatars, and sharing a chronological 'story' of photos and videos that's broadcasted to all your followers. You must be **at least 13 years old** to create an account.
- **TikTok** – Allows users to create a short video (15 seconds to 5 minutes) to share with others on TikTok or other social platforms. Users can also send their friends videos, emojis, and messages with direct messaging. Influencers often use the "live" feature. This feature is only available for those who have at least 1,000 followers and are over 16 years old. If over 18, the user's followers can send virtual "gifts" that can be later exchanged for money. You must be **at least 13 years old** to create an account.
- **Facebook Messenger** – Facebook Messenger is an instant messenger service owned by Facebook. Though Facebook Messenger is owned and managed by Facebook, the app is separate to the social platform. You do not have to be a Facebook account holder to use Facebook Messenger. You must be **at least 13 years old** to create an account.

See Appendix 1 for more apps and their age restrictions.

Listen

- Take an active interest in your child's life online and talk openly with them about the things they do. Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together with your child can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.
- To start a conversation with your child you could tell them that you understand that some young people share images and videos online and that you're interested to know what they think about it and how they think they can keep themselves safe.

Dialogue – keep talking

- Ensure that your child knows that once a picture, video or comment is sent or posted online, then it can be very difficult to remove as other people can forward it and share it with others, without them even knowing.
- www.childnet.com and www.thinkuknow.co.uk has some useful tips and ideas for parents/carers about starting conversations regarding online safety.
- Always ensure your child knows how to report and block people online who may send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply to cyberbullying and to keep any evidence.
- Make sure your child knows it's important that they tell an adult they trust, if anything happens online that makes them feel *scared, worried or uncomfortable*.



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Remember, the internet is an essential part of young people's lives and provides them with tremendous opportunities. The vast majority use it without coming to any harm so it is essential to be realistic: banning the internet or web sites often will not work and it can make a child feel less able to report a problem or concern, so education around safe use is essential.

Websites to visit for more information:

[ThinkUKnow](#) – Visit the "Parent/Carer" Section and use the "Click CEOP" button to seek advice and report online abuse

[Child Net](#) – Visit the 'Know it All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety

[Get Safe Online](#) – Free up-to-date security advice including using complex passwords and managing hacked accounts

[Internet Matters](#) – Information from the four largest internet service providers (BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin)

[NSPCC](#) - NSPCC has linked up with O2 to provide information for parents about popular social media sites, apps and games.

[Safer Internet](#) – Parents guides to safety tools on popular devices and signpost report mechanisms for some websites.

[CEOP and Parent Zone](#) – Information from CEOP and Parent Zone about the most popular apps for children and young people

[Kent Police](#) – Guidance from Kent Police

[KCC](#) – Guidance from Kent County Council

If you are worried that your child is at risk of harm or a criminal offence has been committed then you can report your concerns to the Police or Children's Social Care. Please do not notify suspicious profiles of your actions, as this could enable them to delete material that might be required for any Police investigations. You can contact Kent Police via 101 or 999 if there is immediate risk or CEOP by visiting www.ceop.police.uk and using the 'Click CEOP' reporting button. You can also contact Kent Children's Social Services on 03000 41 11 11, or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads, Mrs Lay, Mrs Ashmore and myself, are available to discuss any help you may need or concerns that you may have.

Yours sincerely

S. Garrett

Mrs S Garrett
Headteacher



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Appendix 1

App/Social Media Site	Type	Age Restrictions
Facebook	Popular social network with over a billion users	13+
Fortnite	Popular strategy survival game for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows, and Mac. It combines Minecraft resource collecting and building with team based survival shooting games. Although the game isn't rating for profanity, its online nature could expose younger players to offensive language from random strangers via the voice or on-screen text chat	In the UK the Video Standards council rate Fortnite as PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 13 years of age
Google+	Social network that is linked in with Google's other services such as YouTube, Gmail and search	18+
Instagram	Photo and video sharing app that is popular with teens. People on Instagram can connect with one another through comments, captions and hashtags on photos and videos	13+
Minecraft	PEGI 7 rated game for violence that lacks any apparent harm or injury to fantasy or mythical creatures and beings, as well as scenes likely to be scary to young children.	10+ (ESRB rating)
Moshi Monsters	Online social game popular with 6-12 year olds that allows children to choose, customise and nurture a pet monster	No age restrictions, aimed at children aged 6 – 12
MovieStarPlanet	Online game with a social networking aspect, which is popular with 8-13 year olds; social networking aspect of the game allows users to use chat rooms to make contact with other users	No minimum age, aimed at children 8 – 15
TikTok	Social media platform that allows users to express themselves through singing, dancing, lip syncing and comedy in 15 second – 3 minute videos that can be shared with others in the TikTok community. On TikTok there is also the ability to livestream via LiveMe – Live Video Chat (age restriction 18+) where users can directly interact with online audiences through chat and live video	13+ Some content restricted to 18+
Periscope	Periscope is an app designed by the creators of Twitter, that lets you share and experience live video streams from your mobile or tablet device	16+
Roblox	Game aimed at 10-18 year olds, although there are no age restrictions meaning both adults and children can play and communicate with each other. Includes a written chat feature, which is visible to players within each individual game. Users can also make and receive friend requests during gameplay and this means that they can chat to each other outside of the game	10+
Skype	An app that has instant messaging, file transfer, debit-based calls to landline and mobile telephones, and other features	13+
Snapchat	Ephemeral messaging app that is popular with teenagers which allows them to share user-generated photos, texts and videos, ie 'snaps'	13+ 18+ for certain features
Tumblr	Blogging, photo sharing and social networking site owned by Yahoo	16+
Twitter	Social networking and microblogging site	13+
WhatsApp	Mobile messaging app which allows users to send and receive messages, images and videos to their existing phone contacts	16+
YouTube	Video-sharing website that is owned by Google	No minimum age to watch videos, must be 13+ to have a YouTube account

Information obtained from <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> and correct at time of printing. See website for further information if required.

Please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/child-online-safety-data-protection-and-privacy> for more information about child online safety and the Age Appropriate Design Code Principles to keep children safe online.