

SANTA'S TECH TIPS

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

Xmas special



Message From Santa

Ho Ho Ho. Well, I can't believe it is this time of year already! I know that it has been a tough year for many of us and as we reach the festive time, I am sure that all Mums and Dads have been working hard to give their children an enjoyable Christmas.

Over a number of years I have been seeing an increase in children wanting these new-fangled gadgets. It is very different from the days when it was wooden toys and teddy bears. Anyway, the elves have been telling me that these new tech devices connect to the internet and parents and carers need to be aware of potential issues over their child going online.

Some of these issues can include watching unsuitable content, connecting with people they do not know and playing violent video games. It can be such a minefield for parents and carers in knowing what to do.

This guide is to help you with some of the issues and set up parental controls and privacy settings to ensure you have a little more piece of mind when your child is using their device.

Have a Safe Christmas.

Santa xx



QR Codes

Throughout this newsletter you will see some square boxes with lots of black and white blocks. These are called QR codes and if you get your tablet or smartphone and click onto the camera app, it should take you straight to the relevant website. You can then read the guidance to help you set up features on your child's device.



TV

Back in the day, me and Elves just used to watch BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. Times have changed

and if your child has a Fire Stick, Roxi or any other device that can access streaming channels like Netflix, then please ensure that you set up the service,

so they have their profile to watch only movies and television programmes that are suitable for their age.



Video Games



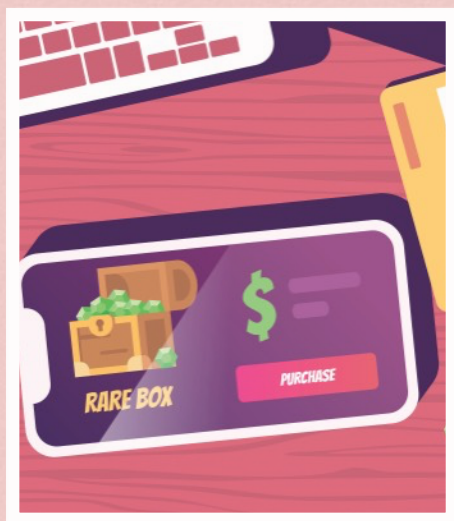
We have a ratings system in the UK - 3,7,12,16,18. Also mobile games have a ratings system.

Remember, the average age of a gamer in the UK is 32 that is why many software companies produce games for those over the age of 18.

Children playing on Xbox Live and Playstation

Network can end up playing with older individuals.

You can set up consoles to limit how long your child plays on their console and lock the age ratings so they can only play games that are suitable for their age. Look at the QR code below to help you look at parental controls for your child's gaming device.



Loot Boxes

In any games now, there are opportunities to purchase additional features, often called 'In App Purchases'. This is to help the player in the game advance further. These will incur additional monetary cost which varies in relation to what is purchased. In addition many games have 'loot boxes' which can be described as a random box of additional weapons or players for the game. The problem is that the user does not know what they are purchasing. There are real concerns about children developing gambling habits with these in games.

Screen time

We all know how addictive the internet can be, especially when playing games. It is important that you have a grip on screen time. This means that you limit how long you child uses their device. It is important that you are in control and ensure that they engage with other activities away from their games console or tablet. Also have rules such as no devices at mealtimes and ensure that smartphones and tablets are not used at bedtime as this can affect sleep patterns.





Apps

Apps have become very popular with children these days. They can download the to play games, watch videos and communicate with

others. However, we have to be careful about what they can do with these Apps. My rule is, if they can view, communicate or share on these apps,

there can be potential danger. My suggestion is to put the parental controls on their device (see page 4) so that they cannot automatically

download an app. This gives parents and carers time to verify whether it is suitable for them to use.

Apps - Age Ratings

An important consideration with Apps is that they all have an age rating. Some of the popular social media apps such as Snapchat and

Tik Tok have a 13 age rating. It is important that parent/carers think very carefully about allowing their children to use some of these apps. There

is a useful guide from Internet Matters about Apps that are suitable for children. Use the QR code for more information.



Apps - Cyberbullying

One area that you need to keep a watch on is your child using social media and messaging apps. Sometimes these can be used by others to

cyberbully other users. Be clear who your child can message and talk to them about not sending hurtful messages to others. Also ensure that you

know how to BLOCK and REPORT if your child does receive an unwanted message. More details can be found by using the QR code.





Parental Controls

If you are giving your child a smartphone, tablet, games console or computer for Christmas, make sure that you take it out of the box before Christmas Day and set it up and enable the parental controls. Different devices have different ways of enabling parental controls. It depends whether you are buying a Android, Apple, Amazon or Windows

device for your child.

However, once you become familiar with the parental controls, it means you can limit the features and time spent so you can take more control over what they do with their device.



Broadband Filters

Another important area for parents and carers to look at is to set up the broadband filters in the home. This enables you to take more control of what your child can access when online and also gives you greater control, as you can turn off access to

the internet at specific times. Again, use the QR code to find out which provider you use and there is a step by step guide on how to use the different filtering features your Internet Service Provider offers.



Digital Discussions

Ultimately, the most important tool in keeping your child safe online is you. It is important that you set up rules and timetables in your house, so your child can enjoy their digital time, but you have control and ensure that they are involved in other non-tech activities. As

parents and carers, you also need to take to your child about what they are doing online. You might not fully understand the digital world, but talking to them will give them confidence to discuss any anxiety or worries that they might have about being online.

