

# ONLINE SAFETY NEWS

January 2025



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## SMARTPHONES VS FEATURE PHONES?

Smartphones vs basic phones guide for parents



Internet Matters –

The debate around smartphone use in childhood is growing, with some schools, including some in Hertfordshire, starting to ban phones. There is also increased discussion about feature phones as safer alternatives. Internet Matters has created a helpful guide to compare options.

In August 2024 it was announced that EE were launching new age guidance for smartphone usage, addressing growing concerns about children's online safety and the effects of device usage on their overall wellbeing.

**The age guidance suggests:**

Under 11: Use non-smart devices like feature phones with texting and calling capabilities, restricting access to social media and inappropriate content.

Aged 11-13: Smartphones can be used with parental controls and a family-sharing app (e.g., Google Family Link or Apple Family Sharing), while limiting social media access.

Aged 13-16: Smartphones are appropriate with parental controls to manage access to content and platforms; social media is allowed but should be linked to a parent or guardian's account.



## THE ABC ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Internet Matters have created an age-related ABC checklist for online safety:

**A**= Activate parental controls

**B**= Balance screen time

**C**= Check and chat 'We've broken down the ABCs by age to help you manage your individual child's online safety.'

Use the [ABC online safety checklist for parents](#).

## GAMING TIPS FOR PARENTS WITH NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN

Internet Matters has published a helpful [guide](#) – focussing on online gaming safety tips for parents and carers of neurodivergent children. The simple 5-page guide covers research, examples of suitable games, some of the challenges parents face, and the key benefits.



## DISCORD CHATROOM

There are growing concerns around content and conduct in the Discord chatrooms. Discord is a platform that hosts chat rooms dedicated to individual games including Fortnite. In a recent investigative report '[Why gaming still has a woman problem](#)' by Sky News, it was reported that 'There's no way to report Discord users for comments they make in voice chat. There is for text-based conversations, but that is not how many gamers use Discord.'



If your child is using chatrooms whilst gaming, Kids Online World has created a brief [overview for parents and carers](#).

This newsletter has been produced based on information provided through a range of websites, therefore is as reliable as we can provide as of the date of the publication of this newsletter: January 2025

If we can support you, your family or children with any issues relating to points raised in this newsletter or for any other concerns please do contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads:

[caroline.belchem@ispschools.org.uk](mailto:caroline.belchem@ispschools.org.uk)

[amelia.stoner@ispschools.org.uk](mailto:amelia.stoner@ispschools.org.uk)

[candy.gilbert@ispschools.org.uk](mailto:candy.gilbert@ispschools.org.uk)

[sarah.page@ispschools.org.uk](mailto:sarah.page@ispschools.org.uk)

[beverley.curtis@ispschools.org.uk](mailto:beverley.curtis@ispschools.org.uk)

