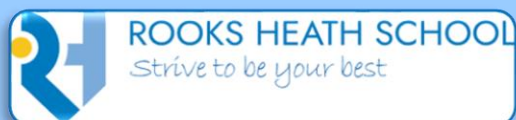


# SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



Summer 2022 – Issue 7

Latest advice for parents and carers



Welcome to our latest edition of the Newsletter from the Rooks Heath Safeguarding Team. We aim to bring you all the latest, relevant help and advice on issues we feel will be of importance to you.

Unbelievably, the end of summer term and school year is upon us, there has been a lot of information given over the year that has, hopefully empowered you as parents/carers, to be more informed and knowledgeable on current safety issues. This last issue will focus on ways to keep your children safe over the holiday period.

*We would like to wish you all a lovely, restful summer break!*

## STREET TAG – NEW FUN APP TO GET EVERYONE ACTIVE TOGETHER



Street Tag is a free child and family-friendly mobile application that uses virtual tags to incentivize communities and families to become more physically active and boost mental health.

On the Street Tag app, you collect points assigned to virtual tags all-around your community including green spaces, once you are within a 40-metre radius of any virtual tag, your app will automatically collect the points, steps can also be synced and converted into Street Tag points. These points add up in real-time on your school's leader board, with prizes to be won at the end of each season.

It's lightning-fast and easy to create new tags on your preferred walking, running, or cycling route on Street Tag. Anyone can create virtual tags around them using the app. Use the Street Tag 'Power Hour' to commit to an hour of exercise at least 24 hours in advance and have all your tag points collected during that hour tripled and maintain a daily streak of physical activity for even more bonuses.

Start using Street Tag to explore and boost your daily physical activity and mental health. Collect virtual tags, sync your steps, try different experiences in the virtual playground and WIN PRIZES.

Information of how to sign up has been sent to you via email, so please do check it out and sign up today!!

Street Tag QR code.jpeg

<https://youtu.be/kcU17-GAsSg> <https://youtu.be/u7B2jm22d3g>

**Join the school team today!!**

## SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY GUIDES

Some useful safety guides, new features etc to keep your knowledge up to date!

### Parents' Ultimate Guide to TikTok (Commonsense Media)

<https://www.common sense media.org/articles/parents-ultimate-guide-to-tiktok>

### TikTok app safety – What parents need to know (Internet Matters)

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/tik-tok-app-safety-what-parents-need-to-know/>

### Guess Who – Tik Tok Trend safety briefing

[Guess Who – new Tik Tok Trend](#)

### Instagram – New Parental Supervision Tools

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/new-parental-supervision-tools-for-instagram-and-quest-vr>

### New Social Media Hub launched

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/new-social-media-hub-launched-on-swgfl>

## WAYS TO PROMOTE EQUALITY ONLINE

In terms of the esteem it's held in, women's football has made impressive progress in a short space of time. This is very much like the online world: it's come a long way, but that doesn't mean that we should stop trying to make it even better. The Women's European Football Championships are underway and that's a timely reminder of how important it is to give everyone the respect they deserve online – regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or anything else. Many sports people including footballers often have as many online comments about their gender, skin colour or LGBTQ+ status as their footballing skills. The Global Equality Commission together with National Online Safety had produced a guide to help young fans kick online discrimination into touch!

In the guide you will find tips on a number of potential issues such as 'pack mentality', haters and discrimination. There are some top tips for spreading positivity, not prejudice, during this summer's Euro Championships.

[Free Online Safety Guide | Equality Online National Online Safety](#)

## TRAINEE EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is a government initiative designed to increase access and availability of mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in school. MHST is made up of Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPS). Assigned to support children and young people and their families in schools through a range of low intensity, early interventions and by supporting schools to implement a whole school approach to mental wellbeing.

At Rooks Heath we have been lucky enough to be part of the programme, which includes hosting a trainee. Jelin Pishdary has been working with us since March and will continue her placement until Christmas.



# 12 Ways to Champion EQUALITY ONLINE

In terms of the esteem it's held in, women's football has made impressive progress in a short space of time. That's a bit like the online world: it's come a long way, but that doesn't mean we should stop trying to make it even better. The Women's European Football Championships are underway, and that's a timely reminder of how important it is to give everyone the respect they deserve online – regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or anything else. In partnership with the Global Equality Commission, we've produced a special guide to help young fans kick online discrimination into touch!

## 1 KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT

Expressing views based on prejudice about a part of someone's identity – their race, gender or a disability, say – counts as online hate.

## 2 WHEN "BANTER" ISN'T FUNNY

Discrimination is sometimes disguised as humour: some memes, clips or gifs that certain people try to pass off as "funny" might actually be offensive.

## 3 BE YOUR OWN PERSON

Set a good example through your own online communication. Think whether you'd say a thing in real life before posting or sharing it online for the world to see.

## 4 SEEING SHOULDN'T EQUAL BELIEVING

Sneakier, less obvious types of online abuse can stay on the internet for longer, so don't assume that something's OK just because it's not been taken down yet.

## 5 SEXISM CAN BE ILLEGAL

As well as being extremely hurtful to a person or a group, online sexism and prejudice against women (known as misogyny) can be recorded as a hate crime in some cases.

## 6 ONLINE HATE, USED AS BAIT

Sadly, it's not just that being exposed to prejudice online is upsetting – some extreme organisations even try to recruit young people to their cause.

## 7 GET SOME DISTANCE

If you see messages online that upset you, it's probably time to give yourself some space from that site or app. Talk to a trusted adult about how you're feeling.

## 8 TURN OFF THE HATERS

If someone you follow on social media is posting sexist content, you could always mute them or block them – or unfollow them altogether.

## 9 PLAY IT BY THE BOOK

If you see someone discriminating online, you don't have to challenge them yourself. Screenshot their post and report them to the app or site you saw it on.

## 10 EXPLOITING 'PACK MENTALITY'

Sexist messages aren't always sent to a target directly: sometimes, they're posts designed to provoke misogyny among other people.

## 11 POSITIVITY ALWAYS WINS

Go the extra mile and spread some positive vibes! Instead of just reacting to a post and scrolling past, you could add a message of support and encouragement, too.

## 12 CREATE THE WORLD YOU WANT

Remember, you're the boss of your online world. Engage with posts or accounts that celebrate equality and understanding: block or unfollow the ones that don't.

GLOBAL  
EQUALITY  
COLLECTIVE



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Online  
Safety®  
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### FURTHER SUPPORT

If you've been affected by any of the issues mentioned in this guide, there are some excellent resources that can offer further help and support.  
NOS Mental Health Guides: [nationalonlinesafety.com/guides](http://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides)  
Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
Stop Hate UK: [stophateuk.org](http://stophateuk.org)  
Ditch the Label: [www.ditchthelabel.org](http://www.ditchthelabel.org)  
Childline: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)



@natonlinesafety



/NationalOnlineSafety



@nationalonlinesafety



# YOUR SUMMER GUIDE TO POPULAR GAMES



## Rocket League

3

A videogame that bridges the gap between car racing, sport matches, and gladiator fights. Put simply, it's rocket-powered cars playing an intense game of football. Rocket League has a reputation for being a toxic environment for gamers with reports of offensive and inappropriate language filling text chats.



## Fifa

3

A football simulation video game where gamers can choose to play as their favourite real-life footballers in their favourite real-life teams. FIFA is readily played by adults of all ages, meaning it would not be uncommon for a young person to interact with someone older.



## Minecraft

7

An adventure game which allows players to explore and create worlds using building blocks to customise their worlds. Children and young people may experience addiction to the game due to its engaging nature.



## Roblox

7

An online gaming and game creation platform. Users can play and create games for others to play. It also includes social features such as friend requests and chats where players can design an avatar and speak to others while they play. Roblox has previously faced criticism following harmful sexualised content being prevalent on the platform.



## Among Us

7

An online multiplayer game which revolves around players attempting to figure out who is a friend and who is an enemy. Crewmates try to complete tasks while the Imposter aims to sabotage the mission and kill them without being found out. Risk of talking to strangers through the chat feature however there is a chat-censor feature which can be turned on to prevent this.



## Poppy Playtime

12

A horror game that involves an investigation of a mystery in an abandoned toy factory. You solve puzzles to survive the "vengeful toys" left behind including 'Huggy Wuggy'. Horror games containing frightening content can cause added anxiety and stress to young people, intrusive thoughts and new fears.



## Fortnite

12

An online multiplayer "shooter style" game meaning players battle it out against opponents with multiple weapon styles. It allows players to create and personalise their own game components. Persuasive design features of the game can keep children hooked, encouraging them to spend in-game currency and add to their screen time.



## Overwatch

12

A team-based game starring a cast of powerful heroes. Players can travel the world and build teams together. Overwatch has been included in eSports competitions and has scenes of blood, tobacco use and violence.



## League of Legends

12

A team-based strategy game where two teams of five champions face off to destroy the other's base. Children may be exposed to bad language, hate speech, insults, and sexual language.



## Apex Legends

16

A free-to-play shooter type game with the objective of being the last team standing by collecting loot and fighting enemy squads. It includes some violence and players may talk to others through voice and text chat.



## Elden Ring

16

An action role-playing game in a world of different characters. You can explore the world, grow in strength and fight or ally those you meet. It features strong violence involving both human and fantasy characters, which can be deemed age-inappropriate for younger players.



## Grand Theft Auto

18

An action-adventure game in which players complete missions to progress through the story. Children will be subjected to profanity, violence, sex, crime and other mature themes.



## Call of Duty

18

A series of first person shooter games including 'Modern Warfare', 'Black Ops', 'Vanguard' and 'Warzone'. Involves live user interaction – squads can be made up of friends or players from all over the world.



## Horizon Worlds

18+

A virtual social space which consists of a catalogue of virtual experiences through the Metaverse. There have been several reported incidents of users experiencing sexual harassment while using the platform.



## Avakin Life

18+

A virtual 3D gaming world where users create their own character by choosing outfits and interacting with others at different in-game locations. Users can easily access children and young people online via private and public chats.



# YOUR SUMMER GUIDE TO POPULAR PLATFORMS

AN ONLINE SAFETY SHAREABLE

**Messenger**

An instant messaging app developed by Meta, popular for group chats, sharing images and videos. This app is also popular for playing games with friends. Can allow young people to connect with strangers, receive message requests from strangers and video call.

16+

**Yubo**

A live-streaming platform designed to help users "meet new people" from all around the world. There have been multiple reports of young people being harassed into sending sexualised or nude images and videos.

17+

**WhatsApp**

A popular messaging platform which allows group chats, video and audio calls. WhatsApp users have been subject to scams and malware spreading through the platform.

16+

**Reddit**

A platform which allows interactions through communities and discussion forums based on particular interests. There are no age verification systems for NSFW channels and can be easily bypassed to view inappropriate content. (NSFW forums are 18+)

13+

**Kik**

A mobile messaging app which allows one-to-one chatting, group chats and anonymous chats. Since Kik allows chatting with random strangers, it leaves children open to exploitation and grooming. Once messages are deleted, they cannot be retrieved.

16+

**Telegram**

A cross-platform messaging app which allows communication between individuals, small and large groups of up to 200,000 people. The ability to connect with others in the area may lead to young people to disclose locations and personal details that could lead to grooming or harassment in-person.

16+

**Discord**

An instant messaging social platform, in which people enter 'servers' so they are part of a group - commonly used for gaming communities. Some servers are NSFW (Not safe for work - often meaning inappropriate/adult content) and may have content age-inappropriate for younger users.

13+

**Snapchat**

A popular image sharing and messaging app that lets users exchange pictures and videos (snaps), with photo effects and filters, which disappear after a period of time. The 'disappearing snap' feature of Snapchat can lure young people into a false sense of security, and they may send images they would not normally send.

13+

**Instagram**

An image and video sharing app. Users can share content that followers can interact with by viewing, liking and commenting. Instagram may push a narrative of a 'perfect world' to young people, and they may feel pressured to post perfect, polished images of themselves.

13+

**YouTube**

A popular video sharing and social media platform. Videos can be commented on, liked and shared. Cyberbullying can occur through YouTube comments and age-inappropriate content may slip through moderation strategies deployed.

18+

**TikTok**

A free video sharing app which allows users to capture short video clips, share them and watch other user's videos or live streams. Age-inappropriate content which can be accessed through public feeds, especially any live streams. This may be unsuitable for young people and can be the origin of bullying trends.

13+

**BeReal**

A once-a-day photo sharing app - Users are given a 2-minute window to share a photo of themselves and their surroundings to their friends. If young people accept contacts they don't know, it is easy to build up a picture of routines in daily life, for example, school uniforms, bus stops and regular locations.

13+

**Twitch**

Twitch is a live streaming video platform which allows creators to broadcast and users to watch content, usually about games, including eSports. Twitch streams are often live and are therefore difficult to moderate.

13+

**NETFLIX NOW Disney+**

Streaming services which often involve paid subscriptions which offers a variety of TV shows, movies, gaming streams and more. Netflix shows such as 'Squid Game' and '13 Reasons Why' went viral and attracted the attention of young people, despite not being appropriate for under 18s. Parental controls which restrict access to age-inappropriate content e.g. profile PIN codes.

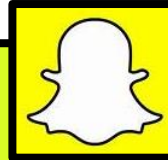
13+  
16+  
18+

**Vault Apps (Decoys)**

Apps which allow users to secretly hide photos, videos and files behind the premise of another app, for example a calculator which can only be accessed through a numeric pin code. Can become dangerous 'stashes' of youth produced sexual imagery.

17+

## SAFEGUARDING ALERT – SNAPCHAT MEET UP



meetup

### What is Meet Up?

Snapchat's newest feature adds an extra layer to their existing Snap Map feature by allowing users to get directions to their friend's exact location. It pairs with Apple Maps and Google Maps apps, which show how long it would take someone to walk, drive, or use public transport to reach the address. Essentially – with the click of a few buttons, anyone is able to gain access to your workplace, school, or home address and the fastest route to get there.

'Meet Up' is accessed by visiting a user's profile to look at their location on Snap Map (a feature that is on by default). Once on the map, a user can access Meet Up by pressing the user's Bitmoji (a cartoon version of the user that appears on their live location on the map) and choosing directions from either Apple or Google Maps.

***There has been widespread backlash at the release of this feature from people of all ages online, with many labelling it as 'creepy' and warning others of its existence.***

### What are the Risks?

While Snapchat created previous features like Live Location to mitigate risks, there does not seem to be the same intention behind Meet Up. As with any location sharing app or platform, there is always a risk to sharing this personal information.

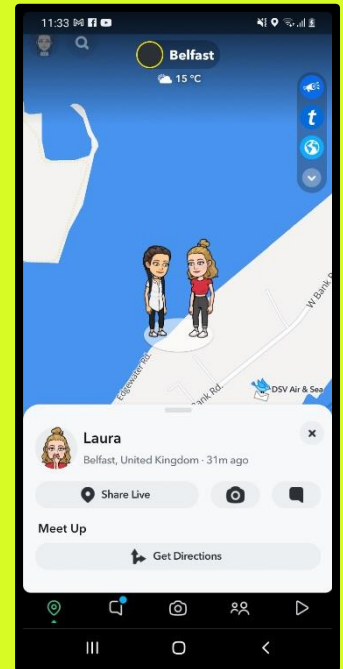
***Live location and/or addresses should only be shared with trusted family and friends.***

***Revealing location or personal address could result in:***

- **Random visits or appearances** from other users who have not been invited.
- **Another user screenshotting the address**, using a second device to capture location information, or sharing this information with others without the user's knowledge.
- **A young person being coerced or pressured** into sharing the feature with someone they don't know.
- **Young people who are in unhealthy relationships or friendships** unknowingly exposing their location to their abusers.
- **Unwanted visits from bullies, abusers or stalkers** that could escalate into forms of harassment, threats, or assault

For more information and safety tips click link below:

[SAFEGUARDING ALERT – Snapchat Meet Up - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#)



## SUMMERTIME, SCREENTIME



While sun time can't be guaranteed, we can predict high levels of screen time for our children and young people during the school holiday season. To help strike the balance between sunshine and screen time, check out the healthy habits screen time pack. All designed to help you monitor screen time this summer!

Click here for all you need to promote healthy screen use

[Screen Time Pack.pdf \(ineqe.com\)](#)



SALE

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

GA  
SA

# STEAM

Steam is a computer gaming digital distribution platform and storefront. It is the biggest platform for desktop- or laptop-based gaming, with a range of more than 30,000 games available. The platform has become a lively social environment for many gamers, and allows people to trade, sell and buy gaming items for real money. Valve, the developers behind Steam, have also released different hardware that works with the platform, including the Steam Deck – a hand-held console that lets users play their favourite games while away from their computer.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### UNSUITABLE GAMES

Among the 30,000+ games on the platform, there are many that aren't appropriate for children. Individuals can view and download games featuring adult content if they verify their age – but, of course, it's easy to enter a false date of birth online. This can lead to children and young people finding games that they shouldn't have access to: featuring violence or profanity, for example.

### SPENDING SPREES

Steam hosts regular sales – including some where game prices are reduced by up to 90%. Some sales promotions also include a mini-game or event which encourages users to spend more money. The sales can be an excellent time for young gamers to purchase the titles they've been wanting, but the attractive discounts can also promote impulse buys driven by the fear of missing out.

### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Steam isn't a social media site, but it certainly shares some of their elements. Users can add other people as 'friends', for example (whether they know them in real life or not), and then communicate privately with them using text or voice chat. The platform also hosts public discussions and groups for socialising. Steam users can also leave comments on the profiles of other players.

### POTENTIAL SCAMS

Sadly, Steam's immense popularity has made it a lucrative destination for internet scammers. The most common ruse is phishing: scammers send links to other users, aiming to trick them into entering their login details – which are then stolen. Once in control of the account, the scammer sends messages to everyone on the victim's friend's list, in an attempt to hijack their accounts too.

### SHADY TRADERS

The Steam Community Market is a built-in trading area where players can trade resources for their games on the platform. Gamers can exchange items, or buy and sell them using real-world currency. It's possible for unwary users to be scammed through bad trade deals, and Steam doesn't usually get involved when this happens. There are also third-party trading websites, which can be risky to use.

### SPARSE AGE RATINGS

Steam is a digital distribution platform for games of all kinds, including ones not rated by regulatory bodies. Getting a game rated takes a long time, and can be expensive, so developers only tend to follow that process when releasing a title that will be physically sold in shops. Most games on Steam, therefore, don't have an advisory age rating on the store pages.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### ENABLE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Steam does have some limited parental controls that can restrict exactly what games someone's account can view and access. This can be set up by navigating to the 'Family' tab in 'Settings', then selecting 'Manage Family View'. The platform then allows parents and carers to share a Steam account with their child and limit them to age-appropriate games.

### USE GIFT CARDS

Having payment methods (like card details or PayPal) linked to a Steam account makes it very easy for a child to purchase new games or spend money on items in the marketplace. An excellent and safe alternative would be to buy a Steam gift card and let your child make their purchases with that instead – putting a manageable cap on how much they can spend on the platform.

### APPLY STEAM GUARD

Steam Guard is an optional additional layer of security that protects accounts. Enabling it ensures that anyone attempting to log in to that account also needs to provide authorisation via their phone or email. The computer that your child uses Steam on can be authorised to prevent having to provide separate authentication for each login.

### SHARE A LIBRARY

Using Family Library Sharing lets everyone at home share games across accounts (while still keeping their accounts separate). The entire game library from each account is shared with the other account holders – a great way to avoid having to purchase a different copy of the game for each of your children. However, if two users want to play the same game separately, you would need to buy it twice.

### SAFE MODDING

Modifying a game to customise it or to introduce new content – known as 'modding' – is common on Steam. There's nothing inherently bad about modding, but installing the wrong mods can be disastrous: they can stop games from working properly, or at all. Steam's mods are unlikely to contain viruses or malware, but it's still possible – so ensure your child reads the mod's reviews first to avoid anything dangerous.

## Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



Source: <https://help.steampowered.com/en/faq/why/765-959-3339-4379>  
<https://help.steampowered.com/en/faq/why/765-959-3339-4379>



[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TWITCH

Twitch is a livestreaming service which tends to focus on gaming. Users can publicly broadcast their gameplay and commentary online for other users to watch. It's a community-driven platform where viewers can support their favourite streamers' channels through PayPal donations, "Bits" and more. Each streamer or group creates their own community for fans to interact with each other. Twitch has more than 15 million daily active users and includes non-gaming topics such as music, cooking and art. Anyone can create a channel to livestream or watch videos.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### UNCENSORED STREAMS

Uncensored content obviously carries a greater risk of inappropriate language and behaviour (streamers can, however, list their broadcast as unsuitable for children). Twitch has strict rules for streamers to follow, but requires viewers to report any streams which breach these guidelines. Each livestream is accompanied by a text chat which it is the streamer's responsibility to moderate.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most people are already aware that some video games feature adult content such as violence, sexual content, profanity and so on. Twitch does prevent certain games from being streamed on the platform, but most are still allowed. It is relatively simple, then, for a child to find livestreams of games that aren't suitable for them – including horror games.

### HIDDEN COSTS

Twitch is free to use because it's supported by advertisers. Removing the ads requires a subscription to Twitch Turbo – or the Twitch Prime package (free for anyone with an Amazon Prime account), which blocks the ads and offers additional goodies such as bonus games. Streamers earn most of their income by asking users for direct donations or gifts of the virtual currency Twitch Bits.

### CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

As well as streamers talking directly to their audience, Twitch enables viewers to use text chat to speak to the person they're watching. It's a social platform which also allows viewers to interact with each other via text while they are watching livestreams – including exchanging private messages. This raises the possibility of a child being approached and messaged online by total strangers.

### WEBCAM SHARING

It's common for streamers to use their live webcam footage. This allows better interaction with their viewers, but also adds risk: the stream might include sponsored content or product placement that isn't child friendly. Using a webcam in livestreams increases the chance of malicious viewers finding out where the streamer lives and provides bullies with visual reactions to their hurtful behaviour.

### PRIVATE CHAT ROOMS

Twitch encourages streamers to create their own communities, which extend beyond its platform. Many create a public Discord group, for example, for viewers to join and communicate with each other. Discord is a completely separate entity to Twitch and offers a higher risk of predators, grooming and cyberbullying if your child gets involved in the voice or video chat with strangers.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### EXPLORE IT YOURSELF

Twitch doesn't have any parental controls, but it is possible to block troublesome users if it becomes necessary. The best solution is to watch some Twitch channels by yourself or with your child to find some that are suitable. Watching some streams by yourself is also a good route to understanding the sort of content that your child would be consuming regularly on Twitch.

### LEARN HOW TO BLOCK

'Security and Privacy' in Twitch's settings lets your child block messages from specific users. Teaching your child how this works will help them avoid online abuse. If they livestream, knowing how to block people in the chat also helps to prevent cyberbullying or harassment. Evading online interaction is impossible, of course, so talk to them in advance about boundaries and safe online communication.

### WATCH WHAT THEY WATCH

Twitch does have a lot of child-friendly content; some streamers use a 'family friendly' tag to highlight material that's suitable for children. However, anyone can use this tag – including users who (accidentally or otherwise) stream games with less appropriate adult themes. The best way to counter this is to view different streams and follow suitable channels for your child to watch.

### LIMIT PAYMENT OPTIONS

Reduce the chance of accidental purchases by ensuring your bank card isn't saved on Twitch or the Amazon account that Twitch Prime could be linked to. Restricting access to your PayPal account is also wise if your child watches Twitch on the device you use to make purchases. Explain to your child that they don't need to subscribe to channels to watch them and that donating or gifting 'Bits' is optional.

## Meet Our Expert

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**NOS** National Online Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISCORD

AGE RATING

13+

Servers and channels marked as 'NSFW' require users to be 18 or older to join.

Discord is a free app which allows users to communicate in real time via text, video or voice chat. Available on desktop and mobile devices, it was originally designed to help gamers cooperate – but has evolved into a more general networking platform for a range of online communities, discussing topics like TV series, music, Web3 and more. Discord is organised around closed groups, referred to as 'servers'. To join a server, users must be invited or provided with a unique link. It's a space for users to interact with friends, meet others with shared interests and collaborate privately online – but it's also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren't taken.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CYBERBULLYING

Discord's easy accessibility and connectivity, unfortunately, makes it an ideal place for cyberbullying to occur – especially as audio and video streams disappear once they've ended, meaning that bullying could take place without leaving any evidence. Closed groups can also be created, giving young people the opportunity to exclude their peers or send cruel messages without adult oversight.

### DIFFICULT TO MODERATE

Like many private communication apps, Discord's real-time messaging can be difficult to control. The system enables content moderation through each individual server – so different groups can set their own rules for what's acceptable, and some groups may not monitor for unsuitable content. Anything that happens in an audio or video stream is also virtually untraceable once the stream has concluded.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Discord mainly hosts private groups, making it easier for unsuitable or explicit content to be shared on channels. Pornography, racism and inappropriate language can be found in some groups. Server owners are required to add an age-restriction gate to channels where 18+ content is being shared – but this solution isn't foolproof, as the platform doesn't always verify users' ages when they sign up.

### ACCESSIBLE TO PREDATORS

On many chat platforms, users can lie about their age or true identity – and Discord is no exception. Predators have attempted to abuse the platform by using it to contact and communicate with underage users – by initially chatting with a child on an age-appropriate channel, for example. While Discord has improved its safety settings, some users will still try to bypass them for malicious reasons.

### CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Discord does have strict Terms of Service and Community Guidelines to protect its users – but, sadly, not everyone adheres to them. Criminal activity including grooming, hate speech, harassment, exploitative content, doxing and extremist or violent material have all been found on Discord servers over the last two years. In 2020, Discord received almost 27,000 reports of illegal activity on the platform.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### REVIEW SAFETY SETTINGS

Discord has a series of safety settings, enabling users to choose who can direct message them or send them friend requests. Your child's experience on Discord will be much safer if the app's privacy and safety settings are configured to only allow messages or friend requests from server members. This will minimise the chances of potential predators from outside the group contacting them.

### EXPLAIN AGE FILTERING

While Discord requires users to be at least 13 to sign up, many servers geared towards older users are flagged as NSFW (not safe for work), which indicates they probably contain material that's inappropriate for children. It can be easy to click through settings without properly reviewing them, so ensure your child understands why age filtering is important and that it's there to protect them.

### SCREEN OUT EXPLICIT CONTENT

In the privacy and safety settings, Discord users are offered the ability to filter direct messages for inappropriate content: a setting that should be enabled if your child uses the platform. Discord automatically tries to flag images that are explicit, but the setting must be manually enabled for text. If a young user is sent explicit content in a direct message, Discord will scan and (if necessary) delete it.

### MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's wise to regularly review your child's activity on Discord. This can include checking their safety settings to ensure they're correctly enabled, talking about which servers they've joined and reviewing some of their friends and direct messages. Ask if anything has made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Things can change quickly online, so plan routine check-ins and follow up frequently.

### DISCUSS GOOD ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The anonymity offered by the internet often leads people to communicate more openly online and behave differently than they would at school or home. It's crucial to bear in mind, though, that every internet user is still a real person. Talk to your child about the severe and lasting consequences that cyberbullying or exchanging inappropriate material online can have in the real world.

### HAVE CANDID CONVERSATIONS

It can sometimes be awkward to discuss topics like grooming, pornography, racism or explicit content with your child – but it's important to ensure they're aware of the harms these things can pose. Talking openly about these subjects is a great way to help your child feel more comfortable about coming to you if they experience an unwanted encounter on Discord (or anywhere else online).

## Meet Our Expert

Coral Cripps is a Canadian-born, London-based tech journalist at [gmw3.com](http://gmw3.com): a website specialising in all things Web3, gaming and XR (extended reality). With a focus on brands and culture, she researches and writes about the ways that our current innovations – including the metaverse and Web3 – are impacting people, places and things.



National Online Safety®

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Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/discord> © also advertising here on popular chat app <https://www.foxit.com> <https://india.cnet.com/story/discord-is-a-risk-for-gamers-and-sexual-abuse/> <https://hackuporn.com/discord-doesnt-kill-off-all-of-your-avatars-and-cm/154622564>



[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)



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## PARENTAL ON-LINE SAFETY TIPS

With the technological advances that had to be made during the lockdown periods over the last 18 months, learning from home was forced to be increased. This meant that young people were spending a lot more time on-line doing their schoolwork, gaming, and socialising. However, it's important we all consider how we can help keep young people safer online. Here's some information about what your child may enjoy online and what you can do to help keep them safer!

### Online gaming

Online games are social activities, and most have features that allow young people to chat with others whilst they play.

For information about the positives of gaming, the risks of 'in-game chat' and measures you can take to help protect your child, watch this short video:

**[In-game chat: a guide for parents and carers](#)**

### Sharing images and videos

Young people often share images or 'selfies' and there is potential for some of those to be nude or nearly nude images. Young people share 'nudes' for a number of different reasons, and some situations are riskier than others.

For information about the contexts in which images are shared and how best to respond, take a look at **[nude selfies: a parent's guide](#)**.

### More information?

Thinkuknow is the education programme from the National Crime Agency's Child Protection Command CEOP (NCA-CEOP). Their aim is to protect children and young people from sexual abuse online.

For more information, advice and guidance, visit their **[parents website](#)** and download their **[home activity worksheets](#)** for fun, online safety activities to do with your family.

## Steps you can take to help keep your child safer online

**Have an ongoing conversation:** Continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use, and what they like and don't like and any concerns about being online. Discuss with them when to unfollow, block or report.

For help starting this conversation, read **[having a conversation with your child](#)**.

**Make sure they know where to go for support:** Remind your child they can always speak to you or an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried or upset. Remind them that they won't be in trouble at that you are there to help. For a breakdown of report services, visit:

**[Supporting your child with reporting unwanted content online](#)**

**Make sure they know about NCA CEOP:** Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse to NCA CEOP at **<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>** and get support from a specialist Child Protection Advisor.



# DIRECTORY OF AVAILABLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



## Urgent mental health support - 24/7 crisis lines

Every mental health trust in London has put in place a **24/7 crisis line** for people of all ages - children, young people and adults. The lines which are free to call can provide advice to those in a crisis. These crisis lines are supported by trained mental health advisors 365 days a year.

You can find the 24/7 crisis line numbers using the NHS Service Finder (link below) but the table provides all of the telephone numbers in London.

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>

Area	Boroughs covered	24/7 crisis line number
North West London	Brent, Hillingdon, Harrow, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster	0800 0234 650
	Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith & Fulham	0800 328 4444
North Central London	Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington	0800 151 0023
North East London	City & Hackney	0800 073 0006
	Newham	0800 073 0066
	Tower Hamlets	0800 073 0003
	Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest	0300 555 1000
South West London	Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth	0800 028 8000
South East London	Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark	0800 731 2864
	Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich	0800 330 8590

### shout 85258

Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when immediate assistance is required  
Text "SHOUT" to 85258 or [visit Shout Crisis Text Line](#)

### SAMARITANS

[Samaritans](#) 24/7 365 days a year - they are here to listen and provide support  
Call: 116 123 or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

### Crisis Tools

[Crisis Tools](#) helps professionals support young people in crisis - short accessible video guides and text resources  
Sign up for free resources [here](#)

### PAPYRUS

[Papyrus](#) provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person  
Call: 0800 068 41 41 or Text: 07860 039967 (opening hours 9am to midnight - 365 days a year)

### childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME  
[Childline](#) confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem  
Call: 0800 1111 anytime or [online chat with a counsellor](#)

## Urgent and other support available

### Good Thinking

[Good Thinking](#) is London's digital wellbeing service and provides a range of resources for young people to help improve mental wellbeing including free NHS-approved apps

### THE MIX

[The Mix](#) provides free, confidential support for young people under 25  
Call: 0808 808 4994 (11am - 11pm every day) or [Email](#)

### Beat

[Beat](#) provide support to help young people who may be struggling with an eating problem or an eating disorder  
Call the Youthline (under 18's) 0808 801 0711 or Studentline 0808 801 0811 (9am - 8pm during the week and 4pm - 8pm on weekends and bank holidays)

### kooth

[Kooth](#) is a free, safe and anonymous online mental wellbeing community including live chat with the team, discussion boards, magazine with helpful articles and a daily journal a magazine



## WELLBEING SUPPORT



Is a Digital Mental Wellbeing website that has various support for young people, parents and carers, employers and employees and faith and belief communities.

You will find help on topics such as sleep, anxiety low mood and stress. There are podcasts, apps, workbooks, and guides together with self-assessments that you can take. Click link below to take you straight to the Parent and Carers section of the website.

[Parents and carers | Good Thinking \(good-thinking.uk\)](https://www.good-thinking.uk)



Offering self-care along with help and support for your children's mental health. Link will take you straight to the parent/carer section  
Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.



Useful directory of subjects that you may require support for  
[Mind in Harrow Mental Health Information Directory - Subjects](#)

## SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER



**Parents, are you worried about:** Your child's behaviour, finances putting food on the table, employment, housing, your own mental health, or relationship difficulties and want to talk about these?

**Students, are you worried about:** Your mental health, food, arguments or fights at home, covid-19, or do you have worries about your brother or sister or friend?

***I will be holding drop-ins over the telephone on the days and times listed below:***

**Mondays 2-4pm    Thursdays 10am-12noon**

**Please email:  
Ariz.baig@harrow.gov.uk to arrange a call back. If these times don't work for you, we can find another time.**

## SAFER SCHOOLS WEEKLY DROP-IN SESSIONS



Another fantastic new service we have to offer, is Our Safer Schools officer will be facilitating Drop-in sessions weekly on Thursdays between 9.30am and 12.30pm.

This service provides another vital support link for our students.

- The session is a chance for our students to speak to our Safer Schools Officer for any reason including to enquire about Police Cadets or gain information on personal safety.
- Students have been made aware of this service via their year group assemblies.

Thursday  
s 9.30am-  
12.30pm



**NSPCC** Dedicated Helpline  
0800 136 663

This new dedicated helpline provides support to both children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse in educational settings or has concerns about someone or the issues raised. Support and advice include how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish.

The helpline will also provide support to parents too. More information is available at

[Dedicated helpline for victims of abuse in schools](#)  
[NSPCC](#)

**stop it now!** UK & Ireland  
Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

### [Stop It Now! UK and Ireland](#)

encourages adults to create a society that no longer tolerates the sexual abuse of children. There is a confidential and anonymous helpline and email service – 0808 1000 900 or live chat, secure email if you are not ready to speak to someone on the phone.

Click the following links:  
[Live chat - Stop It Now](#)  
[Stop It Now! Secure email](#)

## Parents/Carers Learning Programme

### Sexual Abuse Learning Programme (Parents Protect)

Parents Protect has developed this online child sexual abuse and exploitation awareness learning programme for parents/carers and professionals to help:

- Understand potential risks
- Recognise the signs of possible abuse in children
- Beware of inappropriate behaviour in adults
- Know where to go for help if you have concerns and would like to talk about them

Click here: [Sexual Abuse Learning Programme - Parents Protect](#)

**Parents Protect**

Together we can prevent  
child sexual abuse

## On-Line Grooming



IWF safety campaign aims to help parents have conversations with their children about keeping their 'door' closed to child sexual abusers. The campaign includes a booklet for parents, explaining the risks, explaining why children are vulnerable, and suggests practical steps that parents can take.

**TALK** to your child about online sexual abuse. Start the conversation – and listen to their concerns.

**AGREE** ground rules about the way you use technology.

**LEARN** about the platforms and apps your child loves.

**KNOW** how to use tools, apps and settings that can help to keep your child safe online.

For further details go to: <https://talk.iwf.org.uk/>



## USEFUL ON-LINE SAFETY WEBSITES

*National Online Safety – safety guides on ALL aspects of internet use*

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

**Internet Matters – wide range of online safety advice for parents to keep their children safe on-line.**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>



## EAL RESOURCES FOR ONLINE SAFETY

Please see below for useful websites to support your children, together with a link for leaflets in other languages that will assist you in keeping your children safe on-line.

**Parents: Supporting Young People Online (Childnet)**

<https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Supporting-Young-People-Online.pdf>

Leaflets available in other languages here

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/supporting-young-people-online>

- Arabic
- Bengali
- English
- Farsi
- French
- Hindi
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Somali
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Welsh

## PARENTAL SUPPORT

YOUNG MINDS

During these extremely tough times, parents find themselves pulled in many different directions. Concerns about COVID-19, work from home/children at home, along with a possible financial impact make for a stressful household. **Young Minds** have created a useful 'Supporting Parents Help Finder'. By answering six questions, parents can find out how to support their child's mental health during the pandemic (and beyond). Find the help finder here:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/supporting-parents/>

## HelpHarrow

### Help Harrow Digital Product

Help Harrow is being delivered in partnership with Harrow Council. It is a self-referral system for all ages, targeting acute needs in specific social areas in Harrow.

#### Help Harrow Key Points:

- A portal as a way of connecting vulnerable residents to vital services in the borough during and throughout the current pandemic.
- Currently offers support for food poverty, advice/information in all areas of life, as well as mental health and emotional wellbeing support.
- A 'Single Point of Contact' referral system.
- Referrals can be made directly by the person in need or via an Access Point.

#### Key Benefits to HelpHarrow.org Users:

- A virtual One stop shop" to organisations and services in the Harrow.
- A choice of relevant organisations listed to support the user's needs.
- Process to start engagement with a person in need within 2 working days of referral received.
- Key organisations in the system including but not limited to Citizen Advice Bureau, MIND, Age Concern and Harrow Carers.

#### Who is Help Harrow for?

- Local Harrow residents for self-referral
- Households affected by Covid-19
- All ages
- Organisations

Please click on link for more details

<https://helpharrow.org/>

## PARENTING SMART (Place2Be)

The children's mental health charity, Place2Be, has launched a new website aimed at helping parents with typical situations they may experience with children.

Advice can be found on over forty topics including:

***Understanding sibling rivalry***

***My child is lying, what does it mean, what should I do?***

***My child has trouble going to sleep***

***My child says, 'I hate you!'***

***Cultural identity: who am I?***

The Parenting Smart website can be found here: <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>







## HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Do you need help from the foodbank?  
**THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IS TO GET A  
FOODBANK VOUCHER.**

To provide the most appropriate help for your circumstances, Harrow foodbank works with local agencies. If they feel you are struggling to put food on the table, they will issue you with a foodbank voucher. The local agency can also provide long term support if needed to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis.

Agencies that they work closely with include: Citizens Advice, housing support officers, children's centres, health visitors, social services, and some local charities.

### To Get In Touch

If you [call or email](#) the foodbank they can talk through your situation and put you in touch with the relevant local agency.

[Harrow Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](#)

## LEARN HARROW

If you are struggling with Home Learning and supporting your children during this current Lockdown, Learn Harrow, promoted by Harrow Council, provides a wide choice of learning opportunities for all ages and abilities across the borough in partnership with various providers.

They have created a google form for parents to tell them what they are interested in:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pfXbm0GNJh1Xq3bQqjs8oSfBo3z3v23gZdfVSPk8whg/edit>

They are running various different courses for secondary school parents to attend such as:

- How to use learning platforms such as Google, Zoom and Teams
- Awareness of teenage mental health and how to approach this with your own child
- How to monitor children on the internet
- How to motivate their children to do work
- ESOL
- Functional Skills Maths/English/ICT



*Online Counselling Service  
for 11-25-year-olds in Harrow*

As part of Mental Health services for young people in Harrow, the service complements their existing early intervention, Harrow Horizons.

It is a free online counselling and emotional well-being support service providing young people in Harrow, aged 11-25 years (up to 25th birthday), with a free, safe and secure means of accessing support with their emotional health and wellbeing from a professional team of qualified counsellors.

## SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Rooks Heath College Safeguarding Team have been trained to an advanced level on all aspects of safeguarding. The team is available to any student, parent or school staff member to discuss and report any safeguarding concerns.

The team Members are as follows:

**Designated Safeguarding Lead -**

Ms S Rockell

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads –**

Ms V Cobblah-West and Miss L Dale

**School Social Worker**

Mr Ariz Baig

## Are all your contact details up to date?

If you change your home phone/email/mobile number, please let the school know, so that we have the most up-to-date contact details.

**Useful contacts to report a concern  
If you are worried and need help, then please  
contact one of the following:**

For children click here



Online here



Harrow Children's Services [click here](#)

**020 8901 2690**

Share the HOPE  
Save a life

**HOPELINEUK**  
0800 068 41 41 07860 039 967 pat@papyrus-uk.org

EMERGENCY  
APPEAL

