

Online safety remains an important part of your child's education and at Allenbourn we make sure that this is covered in lessons, assemblies and workshops. There are many positives to age appropriate social networking and online gaming, but also where many risks are found. Below are some of the recent dangers shared by the Dorset Police Cyber Safety Team, which we felt you should be aware of.

**Facebook/Instagram:** Two of the biggest and most popular social networks, which users should be 13 years old and above to use. If your child has a Facebook or Instagram account, they need to have a high level of maturity or there is the risk they will end up in a situation they can't cope with. Both services allow the user to live stream, private message, group chat, access to and sharing content appropriate or inappropriate as well as geotagging locations. It is recommended that if your child has an account, you should regularly check their privacy settings and befriend them yourself so that you can monitor their use.

Useful links:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/facebook/>

**Facetime/ooVoo/Skype:** With any video calling service, consideration should be given to calling unknown people and access to inappropriate content.

**Minecraft:** The content in Minecraft is deemed to be suitable for any child aged 7 and above. It is important that if you have a child with a particularly addictive nature, you monitor how long they spend on the game. There are chat options available and players can be contacted even in the pocket edition of the game. These can be switched off, but there are other ways to communicate without this function such as using the blocks to create signs. This means that your child could still be at potential risk of online bullying. One solution to this is to use Minecraft Realms, a subscription service that allows you to pick a number of users your child can play with. The cost is only a few pounds and means your child is fully protected.

Useful links:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/minecraft-a-parents-guide/>

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**Musical.ly:** If your child is using Musical.ly please be extra vigilant. This is a video social networking site with an age rating of 12+. It allows users to Share lyrics (including those that are explicit), share content/location, live streaming and private message. It is this level of interaction which is of concern as adults can use Musical.ly to exploit children. To limit these dangers it is important that the privacy settings are correct. There are three privacy settings – 'Who can see my videos?', 'Can people see where I live?', 'Can I be messaged by people I don't know?' The app tries to encourage you to share as much content as possible in the public domain. With children this is extremely risky and it is recommended that you regularly check your child's setting if using this app. There is also the option to live stream using 'Live'ly', which has also lead to many serious problems with children.

**Roblox:** Is an extremely popular online gaming platform for those aged 8 and above. There are a number of ways strangers can interact with your child such as in and out of game chats, which a headset can be used for. There are few security options to lock content and although it is a game, Roblox should be viewed more as social media for young people. It is also worth knowing that not all of the games found on Roblox are appropriate for young children. Users can create their own mini games, which isn't controlled and can allow for inappropriate content. To be fully safe with Roblox, its use needs to be supervised as the parent controls do not offer huge protection.

Useful links:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/roblox/>

**Snapchat:** This social network is rated as 13 years and older. Images and videos can be recorded with ease and uploaded. Young people enjoy using Snapchat and believe that that the images disappear after a set time. This is misleading as it is easy to retain them. There is also a location service, which means friends can see exactly where you are and even where you live. Snapchat is increasingly used for Cyberbullying and its instant nature of sharing content has led to many problems across Dorset.

Useful links:

<http://home.bt.com/tech-gadgets/internet/social-media/what-is-snapchat-a-safety-guide-for-parents-11364052742537>

**Yubo/Yellow:** This app is for 12 years and older. It is viewed as a teenage dating app similar to Tinder. Yubo has been used to exploit young people and the sharing of sexual content. We would recommend extreme caution if you are allowing your child to use this service.

**Youtube:** The age rating for Youtube is 13 and above. Most content is safe, however there are a number of videos which are not. The recent incident with the popular Youtuber, Logan Paul, highlights the problematic nature of self-made content. **YouTube Kids** is a safer alternative for Children under 12. This has additional controls such as time limits and age filtering. If your child has a Youtube account make sure that the content shared is not placing them in danger or reflecting negatively on them.