

# Helena Romanes School Safeguarding

## Parent/Carer resources and support



### Document links

[Safeguarding news](#) - Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide

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## Monday 2nd March 2026

### Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide

#### For Parents - Tips for Raising Digitally Resilient Children

Every parent knows how difficult it is to monitor their children whilst they're online. It can be difficult asking children what they're seeing, their motives, healthy screen habits and more.

Written by a clinical psychologist, BBC Bitesize has released some new advice and support for parents. Although aimed at parents of teenagers, it would be useful for any parent.

Article and resources: **Screen time and resilience: a psychologist's guide.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwb3tcw>

Parents and teenagers often don't see eye to eye when it comes to what teens are consuming online. Mobile phones and devices are hard to monitor - often begging the questions - what are they seeing and is it appropriate?

BBC Bitesize has an exciting new series, **Solve the Story**, which gives teenagers lots of insights to the digital world and aims to help improve their media literacy. To reflect the themes in the Solve the Story, we asked an expert in parenting and child development, Dr Martha Deiros Collado, for tips and advice to support your teenager as they navigate life online.



Clinical psychologist Dr Martha Deiros Collado

By clinical psychologist and practitioner Dr Martha Deiros Collado

Even though children and teenagers are often called 'digital natives', they weren't born automatically

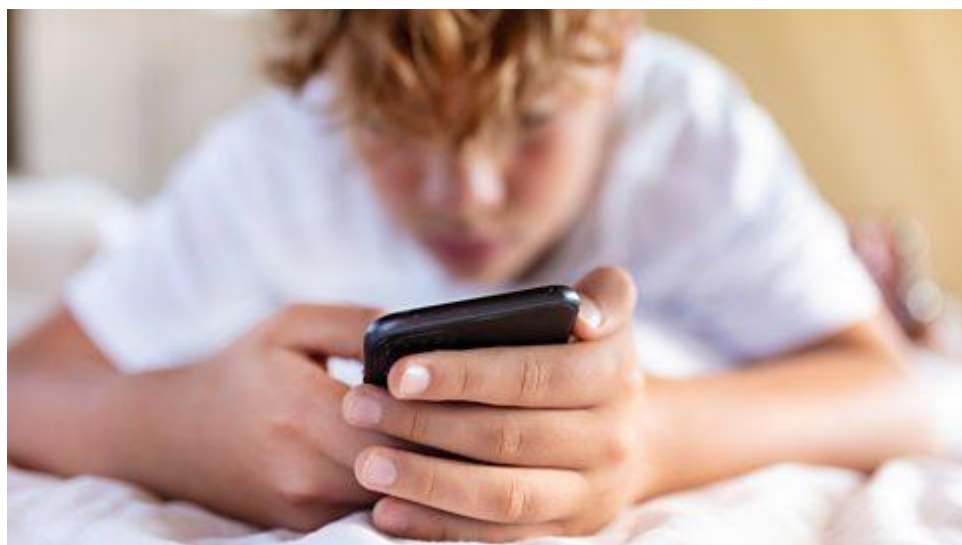
knowing how to navigate the online world in a healthy and age-appropriate way.

During adolescence, while their brains are still developing, teenagers are figuring out who they are. Misinformation online can amplify uncertainty and become overwhelming. Teens often struggle to filter credible sources because their brains aren't yet mature enough to do this effectively. Conflicting information can create confusion, which increases stress and can lead teenagers to experience anxiety.

If parents assume their teenager is an 'expert' in digital spaces, leaving them to explore this digital world alone or with friends, this can undermine their confidence and, over time, can erode trust and limit open conversations about online experiences.

Parents and carers need to build their own media literacy so they can help children develop critical thinking and emotional regulation online. This means teaching them to pause, question and think before reacting impulsively to online content. Here are nine ways you can help:

## Help teenagers question what they see online



The part of the brain that handles reasoning and impulse control, the prefrontal cortex, is still developing until the mid-to-late twenties. Teenagers rely more on rewards than adults, which makes them more vulnerable to sensational content online. When they feel uncertain, they often seek quick answers and validation from peers. This can lead to compulsive scrolling, reinforcing anxiety and reducing their ability to tolerate ambiguity.

If parents don't create an atmosphere of open and honest dialogue at home - where the digital world is discussed and thought about as much as real-life experiences - teenagers may hesitate to share what they've seen or heard online thus enforcing this choice of only seeking peer validation. It also means their safe adults miss the chance to clarify, reassure and support them in navigating confusing or distressing content.



Help your teenager build media-literacy habits by encouraging them to ask themselves three simple

questions whenever they go online:

1. Who benefits from seeing this content?
2. How do I know if this is a fact and not just an opinion?
3. What might happen if I share this online?

You could write these questions on a sticky note and place it somewhere your teenager is most likely to go online. Use them as informal discussion points around the dinner table to open conversations about the 'digital snacks' you've all consumed that day.

### **Explore the motives behind online content**

Talk about why someone might share a story, video or post. How does it benefit them? Who might lose out when this information is spread?

Helping teenagers think about the motives behind online creators and content encourages them to stay critical of what they consume and more willing to explore other sources to confirm or challenge what they see.

### **Use real-life examples to start conversations**



Story-based learning is one of the most powerful ways to help teenagers build resilience and develop reasoning skills for the digital challenges they may encounter. Stories create a safe space for teenagers to explore content that might spark big emotions. When they engage with stories and relatable characters, they practise seeing the world through someone else's eyes, which strengthens empathy, social understanding and emotional intelligence.

As an adult, you likely go online every day. Use your own experiences of videos, news headlines or viral stories as examples to discuss with your teenager. Show them what you've seen or read and ask how it makes them feel, what thoughts it brings up, and whether they think it's real, factual or misinformation. If you disagree, treat it as an opportunity to research together and find the truth as best you can. Sharing your own experiences normalises media literacy, and learning together helps these skills stick.

### **Protect sleep by removing screens from bedrooms at night**



A simple but powerful house rule is keeping screens, including phones, out of bedrooms overnight. Phones away at bedtime are linked to better sleep and lower anxiety in teenagers, and even charging a phone in the bedroom has been shown to delay sleep by up to 20 minutes.

### **Michael Mosley: Five tips for helping your kids sleep well**

### **Can't sleep, won't sleep? Five ways to get your child's sleep back on track**

#### **Embed healthy screen habits at home**

Create clear, healthy screen habits in your household. Agree 'safe screen' areas in communal spaces and 'screen-free' areas where phones and devices aren't used. This helps your teenager's brain and body switch off from the online world and reduces the risk of late-night doom-scrolling.

#### **Help teenagers balance online and offline life**

Heavy screen use can sometimes mask stress or a need to avoid difficult real-world emotions. Going online can feel like coping, but it can also worsen anxiety and create a negative cycle.

Rather than lecturing your teenager to "spend less time online", focus on protecting time for enjoyable offline activities. Notice when you're least likely to reach for your phone. Is it when you're out of the house, socialising or doing something engaging? Think about how you can create more of these moments in ways that include your teenager and their interests.



#### **Create an open, judgement-free dialogue**

Teenagers won't remember lectures about screen time, but they will remember how you made them feel. Instead of telling them off, ask curious, open questions such as: "What did you see online today?", "Who did you talk to?", or "Did you see anything funny, scary or weird?"

Keep it a dialogue rather than an inquest and share your own online experiences too. This approach helps your teenager feel safe enough to talk and reflect.

## **5 tips on how to talk to your child about their smartphone use**

### **Talk to understand, not just to advise**

When adults talk to teenagers about the online world, it's often to deliver a message. While guidance matters, understanding comes first. When teenagers feel seen and understood, they're far more likely to listen.

Start conversations by empathising with their experience before offering advice. This might sound like, "Thank you for telling me your cousin sent you that video. I can see why you found it funny." Trust is the foundation of support, and without open communication, you can't help guide them through what they're experiencing online.

### **Be vulnerable and share your own experiences**



To truly connect with your teenager, show your human side. Talk openly about mistakes you've made online or moments that triggered strong emotions, whether that was an unkind message, comparison on social media or feeling left out.

Share what helped you cope, such as taking a break from screens or talking to someone you trust. When teenagers hear that you've faced similar challenges, it reassures them they're not alone and makes it easier for them to open and see things from a new perspective.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwb3tcw>

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## Useful Resources

The [Essex Safeguarding Children Board website](#) has resources for parents and carers as well as professionals to enable them to fully support children and parents.

People can also follow the campaign on the ESCB [Facebook page](#) and <https://x.com/EssexSafeguards> .

[Brook](#), is a leading Sexual Health and Wellbeing Charity for young people, with over 55 years' experience.

[The 2 Johns](#) specialise in delivering bespoke Child Sexual Exploitation Training to professionals, parents and children, with an aim to totally change the perception that everyone has of 'Stranger Danger'.

The Children's Society, whose [CARE \(Children At Risk of Exploitation\) service](#) works with children and young adults in Essex who are at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation, with partners Barnardo's offering family support.

The [Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service](#) brings together a range of children's community services. Provided by Virgin Care in partnership with Barnardo's on behalf of Essex County Council and the NHS.

The [Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit](#) supports direct work with young people at risk of violence, provide training and development to those who are on the front line and raise awareness with the general public about the dangers of County Lines.

[The Ben Kinsella Trust](#) We educate young people on the dangers of knife crime and help them to make positive choices to stay safe. Our workshops follow the journey of both the victim and the offender through a series of unique and immersive experiences to show young people how choices and consequences are intrinsically linked.

Our workshops change young people's attitudes to knife crime; debunking the myth that carrying a knife will protect you. They strengthen peer values; ensuring young people give better advice to each other and challenge peers who are carrying (or thinking of carrying) a knife.

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## Who students can talk to at school

- Form tutor
- Head of Year
- Pastoral Leaders
- Class teacher
- Student reception
- Learning Support Assistants

- Senior Leadership Team
- Email [worrybox@hrs.education](mailto:worrybox@hrs.education)
- Mr S Emberton - Safeguarding Lead (Secondary Phase)
- Mrs H Grant-Bampton - Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Secondary Phase)
- Mrs J Hone (Primary Phase)
- Miss J Crawford (Primary Phase)

**Problems outside school?  
Worried or Frightened?  
Concerned about a friend?**

**ALL STAFF ARE  
SAFEGUARDING TRAINED  
AND THERE ARE  
DESIGNATED STAFF IN  
SCHOOL WHO CAN HELP  
YOU...**

You can also speak to:

- Form tutor
- Head of Year
- Pastoral Leaders
- Class teacher
- Student reception
- Learning Support Assistants
- Senior Leadership Team



HRS Safeguarding



**Mrs Grant-Bampton**  
**Senior Safeguarding officer  
& Deputy Safeguarding Lead**  
Her office is in B Block,  
first floor, or ask for her in  
student reception or e-mail  
[worrybox@hrs.education](mailto:worrybox@hrs.education)

**Mr Emberton**  
**Assistant Head Teacher &  
Safeguarding Lead**  
His office is in B Block first  
floor, B100 or ask for him  
in student reception, or  
e-mail  
[worrybox@hrs.education](mailto:worrybox@hrs.education)



**Safeguarding at Helena Romanes  
School**

We are here to help



If you are feeling **sad, upset,  
hurt** or **worried**, please talk  
to our team.



**Miss Crawford**  
**Deputy Safeguarding Lead**  
[worrybox@hrs.education](mailto:worrybox@hrs.education)



**Mrs Hone**  
**Designated Safeguarding Lead**  
[worrybox@hrs.education](mailto:worrybox@hrs.education)

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School Child protection policy:

<https://www.helena-romanes.essex.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=799&type=pdf>

## Online safety advice & information for parents

**Childnet** - online safety [Childnet - Childnet](#)

**Educateagainsthate** provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation [Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism](#)

**NSPCC** [Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides](#)

**Dedicated NSPCC helpline 0800 136 663**

The helpline will provide both children and adults who are potential victims of sexual abuse in schools with the appropriate support and advice.

This includes how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish. The helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals too.

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

**Use of social media for online radicalisation** - How social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq [The use of social media for online radicalisation](#)

**UK Council for Internet Safety** [UK Council for Internet Safety](#)

**UK Safer Internet Centre** [UK Safer Internet Centre - Online Safety Tips, Advice and Resources | Safer Internet Centre](#)

**Commonsensemedia** provide independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents [Common Sense Media: Age-Based Media Reviews for Families](#)

**Internet Matters** provide age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world [Information, Advice and Support to Keep Children Safe Online](#)

**Let's Talk About It** provides advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation [Staying Safe Online](#)

**London Grid for Learning** provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online [Home Page - London Grid for Learning](#)

**Stopitnow** resource from **The Lucy Faithfull Foundation** can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online) [Stop It Now! UK and Ireland | Preventing child sexual abuse](#)

**National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow** provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

**Net-aware** provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games - [https://www.net-aware.org.uk/Apps\\_games\\_and\\_social\\_media\\_sites\\_reviews\\_for\\_parents](https://www.net-aware.org.uk/Apps_games_and_social_media_sites_reviews_for_parents)

**Internet Watch Foundation** The IWF is a not-for-profit organisation that works towards the global elimination of child sexual abuse images and videos online. We help to make the internet a safer place for children and adults across the world. <https://talk.iwf.org.uk/>

**Parentzone** provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe online <https://parentzone.org.uk/home>

**Parent info from Parentzone and the National Crime Agency** provides support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations - <https://parentinfo.org/>

**Breck Foundation** The Breck Foundation is a charity founded by Lorin LaFave after the tragic loss of her 14-year old son, Breck Bednar, in 2014, through online grooming. Breck was groomed while enjoying his passions of computing and gaming. We want to ensure that no child is harmed through grooming and exploitation while enjoying their time on the internet. Prevention through education is essential.

[About Us | Breck Foundation](#)

Internet browsing history checks:

[https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/5D0Q-5XX/porn-websites?dm\\_i=5D0Q,AXHJ,3QY95R,18SAO,1](https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/5D0Q-5XX/porn-websites?dm_i=5D0Q,AXHJ,3QY95R,18SAO,1)

Only fans explained:

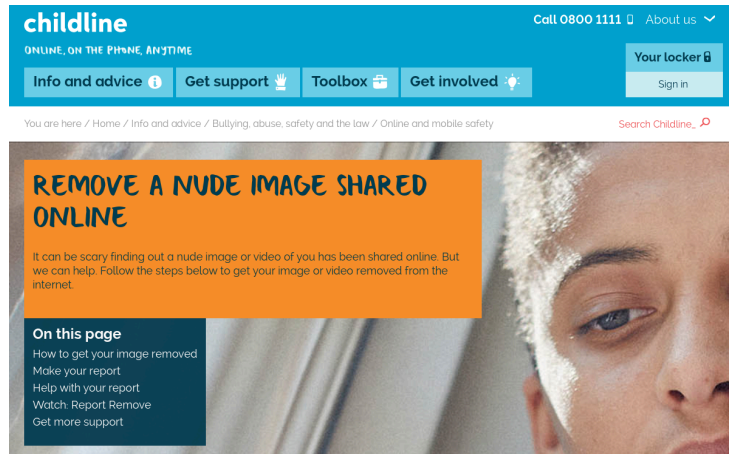
[https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/5D0Q-5XS/onlyfans?dm\\_i=5D0Q,AXHJ,3QY95R,18SAO,1](https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/5D0Q-5XS/onlyfans?dm_i=5D0Q,AXHJ,3QY95R,18SAO,1)

Under-18s who want nude pictures or videos of themselves removed from the internet can now report the images through an [online tool](#).

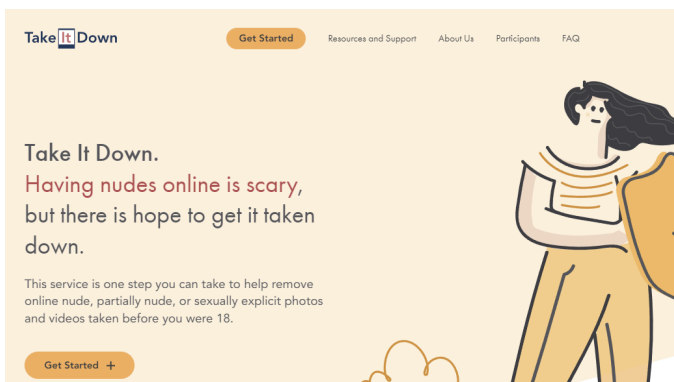
The service - from the Internet Watch Foundation and Childline - aims to help children who have been groomed, or whose partners have posted photos of them online.



**Nude image of you online?  
We can help take it down.**



To access the Report Remove facility on the childline website please use the link below:  
[Report Remove: Remove a nude image shared online](#)



## What is Take It Down?

Take It Down is a free service that can help you remove or stop the online sharing of nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit images or videos taken of you when you were under 18 years old. You can remain anonymous while using the service and you won't have to send your images or videos to anyone. Take It Down will work on public or unencrypted online platforms that have agreed to participate.

It's scary when this happens to you, but it can happen to anyone. You've taken the first step, and we're here to help you with the next steps. Take It Down is a service provided by the [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#).

<https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/>

## Parent guide to WhatsApp - Use link below

[What is WhatsApp? A safety guide for parents | Internet Matters](#)

## Parent guide to Telegram - Use link below

[Is Telegram Messenger safe? Guide for parents | Internet Matters](#)

Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to deliberately trick people into thinking they are somebody else. They assume a fake identity and go the extra mile to make their victim believe that they really are who they say they are. Catfishers often make up detailed life stories and steal photographs of unsuspecting internet users to create their false identities. They will share spurious life and work experiences, friends and photographs to their fake accounts.

Part of our Online Relationships Series



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

# What you need to know about... CATFISHING



## What is it?

### 'Catfishing'

Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to trick people into thinking they are somebody else. They assume a fake identity and go the extra mile to make their victim believe that they are exactly who they say they are. Catfishers make up life stories and use photographs of unsuspecting victims to create fake identities. They will share life experiences, jobs, friends, and photographs to their fake accounts.



## Know the Risks

### Build Relationships Fast

Catfishing can escalate very quickly. As someone executing a catfishing scam is looking to achieve a goal - whatever that may be - they are likely to want to get things moving as quickly as possible and may seem desperate or want to push a relationship without even meeting.

### Fraud and Identity Theft

Catfishers are people who create fake identities and could be taking other people's photos and pretending to be them. It is common for fraudsters to post pictures stolen from social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram. Catfishers may try to limit chat to text-based messaging and anything involving video is likely to be shunned for fear of revealing their true identity.

### Online Grooming

Catfishers can be anyone and target anyone of any age. They may target children and aim to lure them into a sexual relationship or trick them into sending nude or inappropriate images of themselves.

### Requesting Money

Catfishers may also try to trick children out of money. After building up trust and developing an online relationship, a catfisher may use an elaborate story to request money urgently. They may ask for cash for a loan, money for travel, or some other form of payment.

## How to respond

### Offer support

Always encourage children to talk to a trusted adult about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online, particularly if someone they don't know has contacted them.

### Report and block

Make sure that children are aware of how to report and block accounts on all platforms that they use. You can report fake accounts and block users to prevent them from viewing a child's profile.

### Check with Google

If you are concerned that someone is using a child's photographs for their own benefit, use a Google image search to check. After uploading a photograph, use related images to see if anyone else is using photos that the child has previously shared online. If this is the case, report the user directly to the platform.

### Report to authorities

If you suspect that a child has been the victim of any fraudulent, illegal or inappropriate activity, then you should immediately report it to the local police or authority.

## Safety Tips

### Set profiles to private

Go through children's security and privacy settings thoroughly to ensure that their online profiles are set to private. This means that only friends can see their profile and can contact them. It may also be a good idea to check through children's friends list with them and closely monitor their usage, especially if they are being secretive.

### Be alert

In some cases, it's difficult to stop young people from talking to new people. In these circumstances, encourage children to be curious and ask lots of questions rather than rely on the information given in someone's online profile. Through the course of conversations, there may be inconsistencies with what is said and catfishers may be vague in response to specific questions about themselves.

### Never meet

It's vital that children know never to arrange to meet up with people they meet online, and never to send money to them. Tell them to always speak to a trusted adult if they are being pressured into doing something they are not comfortable with.

### Have honest conversations

Have regular and honest conversations with your child about what is safe to share with people online. Discuss the importance of keeping private information private and that anything that could identify them should not be shared online.

## Our Expert

Pete Badh



Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



Twitch - a guide for parents and carers - link- [Twitch - a guide for parents and carers](#)

Twitch is a streaming service which is extremely popular among young people.

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 also includes non-gaming topics such as music, cooking and art. Anyone can create a channel to livestream or watch videos.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TWITCH

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## 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

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.



National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

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 in private online – but it’s also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren’t taken.

# 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.safelisting.com/articles/discord-is-a-haven-for-gamers-and-sexual-exploiters/> | <https://www.fox.com/discord-deletes-thousands-of-violent-extremist-and-crim-846623265>

In the guide, you'll find tips on a number of potential risks such as cyberbullying, predators and inappropriate content.



## CEOP

There is a button to CEOP on the school website: <https://www.helena-romanes.essex.sch.uk/>

CEOP helps young people who are being sexually abused or are worried that someone they've met is trying to abuse them. If you've met someone online, or face to face, and they are putting you under pressure to have sex, asking to share images or making you feel uncomfortable you should report to CEOP.

This might be someone:

- Making you have sex when you don't want to
- Chatting about sex online
- Asking you to meet up face to face if you've only met them online
- Asking you to do sexual things on camera
- Asking for sexual pictures of you
- Making you feel worried, anxious or unsafe

If this is happening to you, or you're worried that it might be, you can report this to CEOP

[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)

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## Mental Health Support resources for parents

### Exam Stress

The following link covers a wide-range of tips to keep students mentally healthy.

### **Supporting Your Child during Exam Time (Young Minds)**

[Exam Time & Exam Stress | Parents Guide To Support](#)

**Young Minds** <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

### **SET CAMHS NHS Instagram**

[Essex CAMHS \(@set\\_camhs\\_nhs\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

Instagram account to provide advice and support to young people experiencing mental health issues.

Please encourage your children to follow the account where they will be able to access early intervention advice and support.

### **MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults:**

[MindEd Hub](#)

**Safe and reliable advice about young people's mental health, created by experts and parents together:**

[Safe and reliable advice about young people's mental health, created by experts and parents together](#)

**NHS Mental Health Charities** directory: [Mental health charities and organisations](#)

**Parent zone** 10 mental wellbeing apps for all the family:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/10-mental-wellbeing-apps-all-family>

**Heads together** [Heads Together](#)

Shout [Shout: Home](#)

The Mix [The Mix - Essential support for under 25s](#)

Kooth [Kooth | Home](#)

**SAM** - Anxiety management



**HeadSpace** - Meditation & Sleep



**Calm harm** - Calm Harm is a free app to help teenagers manage the urge to self-harm.



**Clear Fear** - learn to reduce the physical responses to threat as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.



**'Breethe'** - Meditation/Anxiety



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## Safeguarding Support resources for parents

**Safeguarding when learning to drive.**

We are aware that from time to time, concerns are raised by older students and their parents in West Essex about inappropriate conduct of driving instructors. We have been given the following information to help to safeguard those accessing driving lessons:

[Learn to drive a car: step by step - GOV.UK](#)

[Find driving schools, lessons and instructors - GOV.UK](#) (all instructors on the list will have had a DBS check and passed all the qualification tests to become an instructor)

[Complain about a driving instructor - GOV.UK](#)

Parent line family support: [Parentline family support and bullying helpline](#)

Domestic Abuse support: [#ReachIn](#)

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## Welfare Support resources for parents

Essex Welfare Support Service: <https://essexwelfareservice.org/>

### **Essex Welfare Service (EWS)**

The EWS, a service to help vulnerable people in the community in need of support and unable to access it at this time: [essexwelfareservice.org](https://essexwelfareservice.org) Parents are able to 'self-refer' if they are experiencing difficulties

#### EWS Contact details:

Phone: 0300 303 9988

Email: [provide.essexwelfareservice@nhs.net](mailto:provide.essexwelfareservice@nhs.net)

Website: [essexwelfareservice.org](https://essexwelfareservice.org)

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 2pm

### **Uttlesford Frontline support.**



Frontline is a community project to help you and frontline workers to quickly find health and wellbeing services in your local area.

#### Services available

The Frontline has information on services for:

- families
- older people
- mental health and psychological support
- transport
- health and wellbeing
- disability support
- addiction help

#### How it works

You can refer yourself through the website or app or speak to someone who can refer you through to an appropriate service.

#### Website

Go to the Uttlesford Frontline website - [Uttlesford Frontline](https://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org)

#### Telephone

Telephone: 01799 618855

#### Email

Email: [info@frontlinereferrals.org.uk](mailto:info@frontlinereferrals.org.uk)

#### Address

Frontline Referrals

Barnards Yard

Essex

CB11 4EB

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