

## Age Limits on Apps & Games

Everyone wants to keep children safe whilst using the internet. The curriculum delivered in school gives children the knowledge and skills to help keep themselves safe and build digital resilience. Schools cannot work without support from home too and really appreciate parents & carers working with them and reinforcing these messages and skills at home.

We all want the best for children and it's important that they are protected from unsuitable online content and have a healthy balance between screen time and other activities. The digital world became a huge part of our lives during the lockdowns, and it is important to acknowledge how many positives there are to our digital lives, but it is also important to be aware of the dangers and risks to children that the internet poses.

As well as parental controls and internet filters it is essential that you monitor how much time your child spends on digital devices. Good practice includes:

- setting up a timetable / rota to clearly identify where your child is allowed screen time.
- where possible, ensure that your child remains in the room with you at all times, during their allocated screen time.
- making sure that you are aware of what your child is accessing whilst online
- having relevant parental controls or protection in place on PC's laptops, phones and tablets and on streaming services on TV and games consoles.

It is also very important that parents and carers adhere to the age restrictions on Social Media apps and sites, here are some of the popular ones for quick reference:

 Facebook - 13 years	 Instagram - 13 years
 Tik Tok - 13 years	 Snapchat - 13 years
 Twitter – 13 years	 What's App – 16 years
 Discord - 13 years	

There are other elements of social media use which may not be appropriate for young users.

It is always better to wait until the required age to join any social media service. These rules around age relate to privacy, but also are relevant to safety. Some services offer additional protection for users who are registered as under 18, and by supplying a fake age young people can potentially lose some of this protection. Young people also risk being exposed to content which is intended for older users when they use sites that are not designed for people their age.

Games have an age limit too! These games may seem harmless enough but many of them have unsuitable content, including violence, swearing and drugs and alcohol. Seeing and hearing such inappropriate content could well affect a child's behaviour and wellbeing. Children have also been known to become addicted to such content.



Roblox - No age restrictions but under 13 years have stricter settings, therefore, greater protection. Content is user-generated so children can be exposed to a range of material. Much of it is age-appropriate but children can be exposed to advertising to buy Robux which is an in-game currency. Children can be exposed to predatory behaviour of other people accessing the game.



Fortnite - 12yrs



Minecraft - 7yrs or 13 years and over depending on which version of the game children are playing. If a user is under 13 and they sign up with their correct age, certain game features cannot be accessed, for example, changing settings, making purchases, playing Minecraft Realms or chatting in scrolls.

For any Game or App where contact is made with others please remember that your child can be exposed to unsavoury messages and content - even from other children and privacy settings are essential, making sure your child isn't sharing more information than they intend to.

If you would like more information on online safety and parental controls below some useful links

[Age ratings – what do they really mean?](#)

[Think U Know—Parents](#)

[NSPCC—Keeping children safe online](#)

[Common Sense Media—Parents need to know...](#)