

School E-Safety

Mobile Phones

How do young people use mobile phones?

Young people like to use mobile phones as it increases their feeling of independence as it enables them to plan arrangements with friends and family. They can also have a lot of fun with games, ringtones and by using mobiles to take pictures. Young people can also exchange data (e.g. pictures or ringtones) wirelessly over short distances using their phone's bluetooth technology. As mobile technology develops increasing numbers of children have access to the internet through their phones, providing them with access to their email, social networking and gaming sites etc on the move

What are the risks that young people encounter when using mobiles?

Apart from young people spending all their time chatting to their friends and not to you (!), there are some risks in their use of mobile technology. A large proportion of new mobile phones have web access, and more recently - mobile TV has been launched. This means that young people can access content from the internet and TV wherever they are, and without parental or teacher supervision. With the advent of picture and video messaging - young people need to be increasingly careful about the images they share. It is very easy for inappropriate images to be shared around a number of phones, changed and even put online, where it is impossible to get back. This is particularly worrying, if images are used in child abuse sites. Young people also need to be aware that they put themselves at risk of mobile bullying, or inappropriate intimate contact if they give out their mobile number to people they don't fully trust.

How can I reduce the risks to my children when they use their mobiles?

There are now mobile phone operators who sell phones with filtering software included, so that children won't access inappropriate websites or content. It is worth checking that your child's phone has this capability. Remind your child that any image they send on their mobile can be changed and shared online, and that once they have sent an image they have lost control of it. Read through the young people's website with your child, and help them to understand that they shouldn't give out personal details such as their mobile number to strangers, or other young people that they don't fully trust.

Gaming

Why do children and young people like to play games over the internet?

Gaming can be great fun, and can be a place where young people play and chat to each other. Gaming chat is often focused solely on the game, and young people will often swap user names to ensure that they can get to the next levels.

What are the risks to children and young people when gaming?

Gaming sites can be fantastic fun for young people, however as with any online technology - there are risks. The three main risks are:

Addiction Online gaming can occasionally be addictive for young people. They can become so involved in the gaming communities that they lose touch with their offline friends, in favour of spending time with online users playing games. Young people often spend hours every night playing games, especially when their parents have gone to bed. For this reason, CEOP recommends that the computer is kept in a family room. Parents will also then be able to monitor what games their children are playing, to ensure they are age appropriate.

Abuse Some young people who use online games can be abusive to other gamers. This can range from saying nasty things if there is a chat facility within the gaming site, to always winning and not sharing cheats or knowledge on how to progress to the next level. Young people should be encouraged that when they play online games, they treat others how they would like to be treated.

Risky behaviour There are some young people who engage in risky behaviour to obtain cheats or knowledge to progress within a game. Adults with a sexual interest in children will encourage them to engage in inappropriate behaviour for rewards including sexual acts via webcam or sex chat. Young people need to understand that their online behaviour has offline consequences and that if someone engages them in a sexual manner online that they should inform a trusted adult immediately.

How can I reduce the risks to my children when they are gaming online?

Playing games online can be a fantastic past-time for young people, but as parents you may not understand why your child spends so much time playing or how to help keep

them safe.

It's a good idea to keep the computer in a family room. This is so you can monitor the games your child is playing online, to ensure they are age appropriate and also so your child won't engage in activities that could put them at risk. This also means that children will not have the opportunity to spend hours playing games in the privacy of their bedroom after you have gone to bed!

There are unfortunately some adults who have a sexual interest in children, and will use gaming as a means of grooming them. They may encourage young people to engage in inappropriate behaviour for rewards or cheats. Young people often don't understand enough about the risks and should be encouraged to talk to an adult they trust if they are engaged by someone in a gaming area. As a parent, it's vital that you talk to your child and make sure they know how they should behave when they are gaming. They should be encouraged not to accept cheats or talk to people that they don't know in the real world. If anyone asks them to do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should tell a trusted adult or report their suspicions to CEOP on this website

Social Networking

What is social networking?

Social Networking websites utilise applications which help connect friends using a number of tools like blogs, profiles, internal email systems and photos. Well known sites include Bebo, Myspace, Facebook and LiveJournal, and these have become an influential part of contemporary culture.

What is a blog?

A blog is a website on which items are posted on a regular basis often focussing on a particular subject such as food, local news or politics; or as an online diary. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. Since its appearance in 1995, blogging has emerged as a popular means of communication, affecting public opinion and mass media around the world.

What is a forum?

Forums are areas in which participants can leave messages, often in response to a topic. Often these messages are moderated, and the chat is not instant, as with chat rooms and instant messenger. Some social networking sites also provide users with an opportunity to create or join common interest groups, which also utilise forums. Young people often use these to share views on contentious issues and to motivate others to support their cause, making them great for debating.

What is an application?

An application is an enhancement that a user can choose to add to their profile to

improve and increase interaction with other users in their contacts or networks. Young people enjoy using applications to share their interests with others. Examples include 'Top Friends', 'Where I've Been', 'Super Poke!', 'The Simpsons Quotes'.

What is a network?

A network is a general group on a social networking site based around a common characteristic for instance a region, workplace, university or secondary school. If a user joins a network then they can find out more about the other users within the same network.

How do young people use blogs and social networking?

Firstly, they sign up and create their own profile or 'space'. Often, these contain standard sections such as 'About Me' and 'Who I'd Like to Meet' and also include things like Music, Films, Sports, Scared Of and Happiest When. They can also add specific personal details such as physical appearance, and the school you go to. Most sites also have a blog (see 'What is a blog?' for definition) where children can write daily thoughts or include articles which they find interesting.

An important element in social networking is young people's ability to customise their 'space', e.g. by changing the colour of their profile, adding applications to their profiles, uploading images or pictures onto their profile. One of the pictures can be chosen to be the "default image" and this will be seen on the profile's main page. There is often also an option to upload videos as well – including music videos and personally recorded films.

What are the risks when social networking to children and young people?

Although chatting online can be great fun, young people can sometimes find themselves in situations where they can feel out of their depth. Risks can arise when young people give out their personal details to strangers. The online world can often seem very different to the real world for young people, and they can be tempted to say and do things that they wouldn't dream of if they met someone face to face. This can include giving out personal information such as mobile numbers and pictures of themselves.

If they are talking to another child there is a risk that they will misuse this information - for example, by texting abusive messages to the child, or by posting their image on a website; but there is obviously a greater risk if the person that they are chatting to is an adult. Unfortunately, paedophiles - adults who want to meet young people for sex - use the internet, often with the intention of talking with and meeting a child. Young people can be naive to this risk, and often feel that they are invincible, or that 'they would know if someone was lying'.

Young people will often 'swap friends' through IM, and therefore can be chatting to strangers who they feel they trust because a friend of a friend knows them. IM is a very intimate form of communication - more so than a chat room with many participants, and therefore child abusers will often use this as a means to extract personal information from a young person.

Guidance for Social Networking

1. Encourage them only to upload pictures that you as their parents / carer would be happy to see – anything too sexy to be passed round the dinner table should NOT make it on to the web. It's also not a good idea to post pictures which can identify the school which your child attends since this could help someone locate them.
2. Tell your children not to post their phone number or email address on their homepage.
3. Help your child to adjust their account settings so that only approved friends can instant message them. This won't ruin their social life – new people can still send them friend requests and message them, they just won't be able to pester them via Instant Messenger (IM).
4. Check if your child has ticked the “no picture forwarding” option on their social networking site settings page – this will stop people sending pictures from their page around the world without their consent
5. Encourage them not to give too much away in a blog. Friends can call them for the address of the latest party rather than read about it on their site.
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7. Ask them to show you how to use a social networking site - getting involved will empower them to share the experience with you.

Grooming & Bullying

Why do child sex abusers like to use the internet to contact children?

Child sex abusers find the internet an easier place to participate in a range of child sexual abuse activity including contact with children due to the anonymity of the medium. They will often lie and pretend to be younger than they are or people other than themselves, and find a sense of security by operating from the safety of their own homes. They have been known to set up bogus email accounts and chat personas to mask their identity online.

What are children at risk of, from child sex abusers, online?

There are a number of actions which these adults will engage in online. These include:

- Swapping child abuse images in chat areas or through instant messenger with other adults or young people and forming networks with other child abusers to share tips on how to groom more effectively and how to avoid being caught.
- Swapping personal information of children that they have collected with other abusers.
- Participating in online communities such as blogs, forums and chat rooms with the intention to groom children, collect sexually explicit images and meet them to have sex.

What is online grooming?

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 defines online grooming as: "A course of conduct enacted by a suspected paedophile, which would give a reasonable person cause for concern that any meeting with a child arising from the conduct would be for unlawful purposes."*

Often, adults who want to engage children in sexual acts, or talk to them for sexual gratification will seek out young people who desire friendship. They will often use a number of grooming techniques including building trust with the child through lying, creating different personas and then attempting to engage the child in more intimate forms of communication including compromising a child with the use of images and webcams. Child sex abusers will often use blackmail and guilt as methods of securing a meeting with the child.

*The full definition of Online Grooming can be found in the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**

Chat Rooms

What is instant messaging?

Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time text-based communication conveyed over a network, such as the internet, between two or more people on a user's contact list. Examples include Windows Live Messenger, Jabber, ICQ and AIM. IM technologies often include additional features that make them even more popular such as having the ability to talk directly for free; to share files; or to view the other party through a webcam.

What is a buddy list?

In instant messaging applications, a buddy list is a list of a user's contacts that they converse with through instant messaging. On such lists users can view if their contacts are online, offline, online but busy etc. Users can block contacts that they no longer wish to talk to.

What is a chat room?

A chat room is an online forum where people can chat online (talk by broadcasting messages to people on the same forum in real time). Sometimes these venues are moderated either by limiting who is allowed to speak (not common), or by having moderation volunteers patrol the venue watching for disruptive or otherwise undesirable behaviour

Why do children use chat rooms?

Chat rooms are usually areas where people meet to chat as they would in the real world in a youth club or bar. Young people love them because they are often unrestricted; and they can be exciting places to meet old and new friends.

Are there different kinds of chat room?

Yes, there are three main types of chat room:

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) – the oldest and still popular form of chat room is the text-based variety. It is a real time form of synchronised internet chat. It's specific purpose is group communication in discussion forums or channels, however it also has the capacity for one-to-one communication via private message.

2D Visual Chat Rooms e.g. The Palace or The Manor – such chat rooms provide a virtual world or graphic background that a user's avatar can navigate. These environments are capable of incorporating elements such as games and educational material most often developed by individual site owners, who have a more in depth knowledge of the system. Some visual chat rooms also incorporate audio and video communications, so that users can see and hear

each other.

3D Visual Chat Rooms e.g. Habbo Hotel— These are very similar to the 2D variety except that they utilise 3D graphics. This allows the user a more realistic interaction with the environment. The most popular environments also allow users to create or build their own spaces.

What is an avatar?

An avatar is a graphical representation of a user. It can take the form of a 3D model of the user e.g. in computer games or a 2D icon e.g. on internet forums, chat rooms and instant messenger.

Why do children use instant messenger?

Instant messenger is one of the most popular ways of chatting for young people. Often known as IM, this involves two or more people being online at the same time, and is different from chat rooms, because the people involved can only chat to people who are on their contact list. Young people often feel that they can talk more intimately in this environment, and often use their own text style language to do so.

What are the risks to children when using chat rooms or instant messenger?

Although chatting online can be great fun, young people can sometimes find themselves in situations where they can feel out of their depth. Risks can arise when young people give out their personal details to strangers. The online world can often seem very different to the real world for young people, and they can be tempted to say and do things that they wouldn't dream of if they met someone face to face. This can include giving out personal information such as mobile numbers and pictures of themselves. If they are talking to another child there is a risk that they will misuse this information—for example, by texting abusive messages to the child, or by posting their image on a website; but there is obviously a greater risk if the person that they are chatting to is an adult.

Unfortunately, paedophiles—adults who want to meet young people for sex—use the internet, often with the intention of talking with and meeting a child. Young people can be naive to this risk, and often feel that they are invincible, or that 'they would know if someone was lying'. Young people will often 'swap friends' through IM, and therefore can be chatting to strangers who they feel they trust because a friend of a friend knows them. IM is a very intimate form of communication—more so than a chat room with many participants, and therefore child abusers will often use this as a means to extract personal information from a young person.

How can I minimise the risks to my children?

You can minimise the risks by taking the following simple measures with your children:

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It is vital that you know if your child uses chat applications online, and that you emphasise to them the importance of keeping their personal information personal.

If your child uses IM then it is a good idea to ask them to show you how it works—in this way you can also gauge who they have on their contact list and if there is anyone how they don't know in the real world.

It is also a good idea to ask them if they know how to block someone who they no longer wish to talk to.

You can also direct them to the Thinkuknow website, where they can watch films and play games on how to stay safer online.

Consider creating some family rules which you will all agree to on online use, including not giving out personal information, or talking to strangers without discussing it.

Remind your children that they should never meet up with someone that they have met online without you or another adult going with them.

What should I do if I am still concerned?

If you are concerned that your child may be at risk, it may be necessary to log or monitor their conversations, and this can be done through some forms of filtering software - but this should be considered carefully, since a child may feel that they have to hide more from their parents if they think they are not trusted. GetNetWise has lists of filtering and monitoring software.

If you think your child may be in touch with an adult online make a report or call 999 if they are at immediate risk.

Useful Web Addresses

Superclub plus: <http://www.scplus.com/d/index.php>

CEOP's website: <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Cyber Mentors: <http://www.cybermentors.org.uk/>