

Welcome to this fortnight's SMRT Safeguarding Update...

## WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

### Online Safety and Apps

At SMRT we train all staff regularly about online safety, have VIP lessons in place for every year group about how to stay safe online and have a range of assemblies, events and tutorials in place to help students understand and avoid risks online. For parents and carers, setting clear boundaries, and monitoring online activity is essential. This includes discussing the dangers of sharing personal information, cyberbullying, and online grooming, as well as teaching young people how to identify and report inappropriate content.

**Important reminder for all parents and carers: Apps and on-line Safety:**

While our safeguarding updates cover a range of online safety concerns and government guidance, please could I draw your attention to these sites in particular: Discord, Omegle, OwnTV, Thundr, Reality and monkey. All of these sites have an on-line gaming focus and use live streamers. These are specifically for over 18 users and are known to be places where older males have groomed and abused young people in the past.

In order to place further controls on your child's phone or device, please follow the attached instructions for Android and iPhone users.

We would encourage you to check what platforms and sites your young people have been using and report any concerns to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command).

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Top Tips include:

1. Open Communication and Education:

- Talk to your children about online safety: Regularly discuss the potential risks of the internet, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online predators.
- Encourage open communication: Make sure your children feel comfortable talking to you about anything that worries or upsets them online.
- Teach them about online reputation: Explain how online actions can impact their reputation and future.
- Explain the importance of strong passwords and privacy settings: Emphasize that passwords are like digital keys and should be kept private.

## 2. Setting Boundaries and Monitoring:

- Establish clear rules:

Agree on age-appropriate boundaries for online activities, including time limits and websites/apps that are allowed.

- Supervise online activity:

Keep computers and devices in a common area of the house, and monitor their use, especially for younger children.

- Utilise parental controls:

Explore and implement parental control features on devices, browsers, and streaming services.

In particular, see the ways you can limit access to unsafe apps and have controls over these on their phones (see attached guides).

- Be aware of your child's online friends:

Know who they are interacting with online, and if they plan to meet someone in person, always meet in a public place with other adults present.

## 3. Staying Informed and Taking Action:

- Familiarize yourself with online safety tools and resources:

Explore websites like Internet Matters, [Childnet](#), and [NSPCC](#), which offer guidance and support.

- Report any concerns:

If you encounter inappropriate content or suspect online grooming, report it to the appropriate authorities, such as the police or the National Crime Agency (NCA)-CEOP.

- Stay informed about new trends and apps:

Keep up-to-date on the latest online platforms and potential dangers they may pose.

## 4. Promoting Digital Wellbeing:

- Encourage a healthy balance of online and offline activities: Help your children understand the importance of spending time on other activities and hobbies.
- Teach digital kindness and respect: Encourage empathy and positive online interactions.
- Promote responsible online behaviour: Make sure your children understand that what they do online can have real-world consequences.

By taking these steps, we can work together to help create a safer online environment for children and empower them to navigate the digital world with confidence and responsibility.

## Update from the National Crime Agency

Please be aware that the NCA has issued a direct warning to education sector about the growing threat from Com networks, online communities of predominantly teenage boys that begin around ordinary interests such as gaming or music before migrating to private channels on Discord, Telegram, or Instagram. What starts as a community becomes a hierarchy in which status is gained through the commission or facilitation of harm.

Reports of this threat increased six-fold in the UK between 2022 and 2024. In some instances, victims have been groomed into offending themselves.

NCA Director General Graeme Biggar has been clear on one point: these groups are not lurking on the dark web. They exist on the same platforms young people use every day. A young person can be simultaneously a perpetrator and a victim, and the warning signs are not always obvious.



# How to Set up PARENTAL CONTROLS for APPS iPhone

Apple devices come with built-in apps already available: Mail, FaceTime and Safari, for example. However, you can choose which apps and features appear on your child's device and which ones don't. You can also manipulate the features in Game Centre to enhance your child's safety and privacy when playing games, as well as blocking iTunes or App Store purchases if you wish.



## How to Restrict Built-in Apps/Features

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Allowed Apps (you may need to toggle this to 'on' at the top)
- 5 Enable or disable the apps you wish to appear (or disappear) on your child's device

## How to Restrict Game Centre

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Content Restrictions (you may need to switch the toggle at the top to the 'on' position)
- 5 Scroll down to Game Centre
- 6 Choose between Allow, Don't Allow, or Allow with Friends Only in the settings for each feature

## How to Restrict iTunes & App Store Purchases

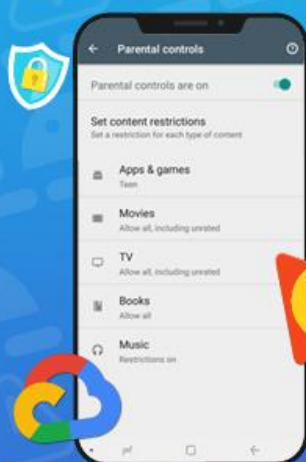
- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap iTunes & App Store Purchases
- 5 Select Allow or Don't Allow for each feature (you can also lock these settings with a password)



# How to Set up PARENTAL CONTROLS for APPS

## Android Phone

On Android phones, restricting access to particular apps usually requires going onto Google Play. From there, it's fairly easy to navigate your way through the settings to manage the parental controls and authentications relating to any apps on the device. These features can prevent your child from downloading or buying anything unsuitable for their age. Updated versions of apps or games that your child has already installed may occasionally contain something inappropriate, so we've explained how to stop those, too.



### How to Block App Downloads (This Also Disables In-app Purchases):

- 1 Open Google Play Store
- 2 Tap the profile icon in the top right
- 3 Tap Settings
- 4 Scroll down to the Family section and tap Parental controls
- 5 Toggle 'Parental controls are off' to 'Parental controls are on'
- 6 Create a PIN and tap OK
- 7 Confirm your PIN and tap OK again
- 8 Tap Apps & Games
- 9 Set the age limit you wish to set (18+)
- 10 Tap Save to apply your changes

### How to Stop Auto-updates

- 1 Open Google Play Store
- 2 Tap the profile icon in the top right
- 3 Tap Settings
- 4 Tap Auto-Update Apps
- 5 Select 'Don't auto-update apps' and then tap Done

### Restricting Apps Through Google Family Link

- 1 Open Google Play Family Link for parents
- 2 Tap the three horizontal lines in the top left
- 3 Select your child's account
- 4 Tap Manage
- 5 Tap Controls on Google Play
- 6 Tap Apps & Games
- 7 Select the age limit you wish to set (18+)



As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

[safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk)