



ST MONICA'S NEWSLETTER

Online Safety Special

Oct 2025

Risks of using AI for our pupils

AI apps and services are becoming increasingly popular, which may lead to your child accessing them without vigilance.

What should I be concerned about?

- The information/advice given may not always be accurate.
- Privacy concerns of how data is collected and used.
- Children may use these apps to chat rather than seeking help from an adult.

What can I do?

- Chat to your child regularly about what apps and websites they are using and why.
- Remind them AI is a tool and not a substitute for qualified professionals who provide tailored advice/support.
- Talk to them about how they should fact check information.
- Check age ratings.



YouTube

YouTube is one of the most popular online platforms, available across many different devices - phones, tablets and Smart TV's. **YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13**, however, younger children can still access YouTube with consent from a parent/ guardian. Screen time on You Tube is very dangerous. Please read this fascinating article on [screentime](#).

Did you know, there are different options available to access YouTube, depending on your child's age?

1. YouTube Kids – a separate app that includes a smaller selection of videos based on the age category you select: Preschool (ages 4 and under), Younger (ages 5–8) or Older (ages 9–12).

2. Supervised accounts – a parent-managed version of YouTube, allowing you to control the content your child can access. You can select one of the following options:

- **Explore**- Generally for viewers aged 9+.
- **Explore more**- Generally for viewers aged 13+
- **Most of YouTube**-This setting includes almost everything except for videos marked as 18+.

Find out more: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420>

What do I need to be aware of?

Whilst YouTube can be educational and fun, it is important to be aware of the potential risks, such as:

- **Excessive Screen time** – particularly due to the autoplay feature.
- **Unwanted contact / cyberbullying** – particularly via comments if your child is sharing videos
- **Adverts** that may not be aimed at or suitable for your child's age.
- **Algorithms** – algorithms influence what we see to keep us engaged.

This can lead to a user being exposed to large amounts of content about one topic/theme, which may not be helpful if it is negative.

What can I do?

- Set up appropriate parental controls.
- Show your child the reporting and blocking tools available.
- Watch YouTube together or supervise use.

Further information ([click here](#))



WhatsApp



WhatsApp is incredibly popular with young people and is used for group chats, voice messages and video calls. Did you know, users should be at least 13 years old to use WhatsApp? No pupil in St Monica's should be on Whatsapp. However, if your child has access to Whatsapp, these safety guidelines are important to read.

In the UK, we frequently see pupils using WhatsApp inappropriately, such as sharing images to embarrass others, sending hurtful messages, spreading rumours, or excluding people from group chats to make them feel left out. Since WhatsApp lacks parental controls, it is important to think about whether it is really the right platform for your child. For example, you should consider if your child has the critical thinking skills to recognise bullying. Furthermore, do they understand how to manage peer pressure and refrain from joining in on hurtful behaviour?

What should I be aware of if my child is using WhatsApp?

- **Group chats:** Everyone within a group, even if they are not one of your child's contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group chat.
- **Inappropriate content:** users can be exposed to content that is not suitable for their age.
- **Location sharing:** talk to your child about the potential danger of sharing their location.
- **Chat lock/secret code:** users can lock chats as well as apply a secret code setting so a chat does not appear in the main chat.
- **AI:** WhatsApp includes Meta AI.

What can I do?

- **First of all,** stick to the age rating of 13+ for pupils on Whatsapp
- **Check privacy settings,** for example check who can add them to groups. Ensure your child understands that they can leave a chat at any time,
- **Show your child how to block**
- Find out how here: [Block and Report Others](#)
- **Use parental controls** such as screen time controls or do not disturb to reduce alerts.
- **Talk about who they are chatting with,** encourage them to think carefully about the messages they send and how they might be received by others. Talk about positivity and not saying anything hurtful.
- **Ask them to think about whether they would say** what they are messaging, face to face.
- **Chat to your child about the groups** that they belong to.
- **Read through any Chat Logs** to see if they are suitable. Any child is capable of mean messages.

Further information

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zc8vvg8>

https://faq.whatsapp.com/773166357950949?helpref=faq_content

Italian Brainrot

Have you heard of Italian Brainrot? It is a viral trend consisting of AI generated characters featuring in memes and videos. It originally started on TikTok but can now be seen on other platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. There are also lots of spinoff content including a game on Roblox.

Whilst the content is generally nonsensical and children will find some of it funny, some content can include inappropriate/offensive language and content that might not be suitable for your child's age.

iOS 26

Apple have released their new operating system – iOS 26. Protect Young Eyes have published an article detailing the changes relating to your child's safety, including content filtering in Safari. Find out more here:

<https://www.protectyouneyes.com/bl>

Managing Digital Spending

Parent Zone have created a guide to help teach your child how to manage their online spending. You can read it here:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/managing-digital-spending-guide-parents>

ADHD, Screen Time, and Healthy Boundaries

Bark have created this guide for parents of children with ADHD to support you in helping your child create a healthy relationship with technology. You can access it here:

<https://www.bark>