



ST MONICA'S NEWSLETTER

Online Safety Newsletter Special February 2026

CBeebies Parenting and Apps

CBeebies Parenting is full of useful information from creative activities, recipes and information about the CBeebies apps.

CBeebies apps are free to download with no in-app purchases. Their apps include:

- Playtime Island - Fun Games for Kids App. This app includes 40 free games.
- CBeebies Learn - Early Years Learning App. This app includes games and videos and is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Get Creative - Open-ended Creative Activities App. This app is free and includes lots of drawing and painting activities.
- Storytime - Reading Stories App. This app includes interactive story books.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/february-2026-primary/>

Today was our Online Safety Day. We welcomed BullyBusters into school to speak with pupils about the importance of being kind and respectful online. The key message was to speak to you if they ever find something that makes them uncomfortable online at home - please back this up at home. Always be approachable and supportive and have those conversations, be the trusted adults.

Alongside this, we spoke to pupils about reducing screen time over the half term break - I challenged the pupils to spend less than an hour a day over half term with digital devices, shorter for our younger pupils. We also looked at how to stay safe online in ways that are appropriate for their age and stage.

Using AI to alter images

AI image generator and moderator tools are widely available and often used by children. Unfortunately, this is starting in Primary School aged children at home across the country. These tools can be used for creative purposes, but we need to ensure our children are aware of the appropriate way in which to use them and the circumstances when they should not be used, even if harm is not intended. Our recommendation is to block the apps and websites that can generate AI images, but here is some key information for parents and carers:

What are AI image generator and moderator tools?

It is when Artificial Intelligence is used to create or modify images, for example it could be used to swap faces, change expressions or for more sinister reasons. These images are often very realistic and therefore difficult to see that they are fake.

Privacy concerns and consent

If your child is using these tools, they need to be aware of potential loss of privacy and the importance of consent. They should know that they should only use images of other people with consent.

What does my child need to know about using these tools?

- Children shouldn't use AI tools to manipulate images of school staff. Even if the child's intention is not malicious, children should not use AI tools to create or edit photos of teachers under any circumstances.
- Manipulation of images of friends or other children – if you are using images of other people, then consent **must** always be sought.
- The tools should not be used to create images that can embarrass or hurt others - this is a form of online bullying.
- Copyright issues – who owns the copyright? These images could be reused by others, which can affect their own digital footprint.

What should I do?

- Chat to your child if they are using these tools and ascertain the reason why. Ask them to show you the images that they have created.
- Check the age ratings of any apps/websites that your child is using and set up appropriate parental controls.
- Develop your child's digital literacy by teaching them to recognise online risks and to behave responsibly online

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok. TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. Here at St Monica's we strongly recommend that your child does not have Tik Tok as they are under 13. If you choose to allow you child to have Tik Tok, please follow these guidelines and ensure underage children are following the privacy rules for added protection.

Account set up

It is important that your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., Direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15.

In addition, advertisements are tailored by age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private. You can read more about the other settings available, such as switching off comments and restricted mode here: [Support for Tik Tok Online Guide](#)

Family Pairing

Family Pairing allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode or tailor your child's 'For You' feed by selecting keywords that TikTok will use to filter out posts. You can find out more here: [Family Pairing Safety Features](#)

What do I need to be aware of?

- Inappropriate content and themes:** whilst against guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. Some of the songs available to lip sync to may contain inappropriate lyrics/themes.
- Challenges:** We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be **risky/dangerous**. Sadly, there are reports that children have died whilst attempting online challenges. Children may not yet have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse that what they see online is not always safe for them to replicate.
- Stranger contact:** chat to your child about how people may not be who they say they are when online.

Refresh your feed

[Tik Tok Help](#)

Blocking and Reporting

Show your child how to use the safety features available.

Further information

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.02.26. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership or copyright in the content of the linked materials.

Balance screen time tips

Internet Matters have created simple tips to help you develop healthy online habits for your child. They also answer key questions such as "how much screentime is too much" and "is gaming bad for children." Access this information here:

[Balanced Digital Diet Tips](#)

7 Steps to Good Digital Parenting

The Family Online Safety Institute have created seven steps to assist you as a digital parent. Find out more here:

<https://fosi.org/program/7-steps-to-good-digital-parenting/>

Children's Commissioner launches new guide for parents and carers

The Children's Commissioner has released a new guide to help you in managing your child's digital life. The guide was written with direct involvement from children.

It includes advice on setting boundaries such as no devices in the bedroom and how to chat to your child. You can find the guide here:

['What I wish my parents or carers knew...'](#)



Headteacher's Hot Chocolate

Each week, pupils who have lived out our values and have demonstrated the “St Monica’s Way” are selected by their class teacher. They are celebrated in assembly and then enjoy a hot chocolate and a chat with Mr Gouldbourne to celebrate their inspirational week.

Mr Gouldbourne	Jude Williams for being an aspirational reader and artist. A young man of many talents, always with a smile and flair. You will go far, Jude!
Ms Tohill	Lewis Garcia - For being a credit to himself at Kinball. He lead the Y5 team, thought about tactics, thanked the referee and congratulated other schools after each match. We were very proud of him.
Miss Byrne	Penny Biggins - Penny has such a special love of books and always looks forward to story time. Your enthusiasm for reading makes every story even more magical. Keep enjoying and exploring new adventures through books!
Miss Andrews	Finley Murtagh - Finley loves listening to stories and always engages brilliantly during story time. He is working hard in phonics and is trying his best to improve his reading every day. Well done Finley!
Miss Horder	Emily Tone - Emily loves sharing stories in the reading corner with her friends. She always looks after our books carefully and reads sensibly.
Miss Hatcher	Jude Farrington - for trying hard to improve his reading and always working hard during phonics lessons. Well done Jude, we can see so much progress !
Miss Tew	Alarna for showing resilience and working hard with her reading, both in school and at home. Her hard work is evident in the progress she has made. Keep up the brilliant work!
Mrs MacDonald	Kaiben Seddon Williams - For always showing perseverance and dedication in his reading. He is a reading superstar!
Mrs Chorzepa	Tilly Williams-For showing resilience and perseverance by never giving up, and her writing has improved so much because she keeps working hard.
Mrs Reardon	Mia Chan - for excellent reading at home and showing great resilience and dedication. Well done!
Miss Gibbons	Josh Tone - for showing a pure love of reading and challenging himself with longer novels.
Mrs Ware	Theou Sunil - for showing fantastic dedication to reading both in school and at home. He has shown real commitment and enthusiasm this half term. We are so proud of his effort – congratulations, you are our Reading Star!
Miss Thomas	Ava Shaw - for being a model reader in school and at home. She has worked hard to read lots throughout this half term! Well done Ava! She is our reading star this half term!
Mrs Gilbertson/ Mrs Birch	Harriet Bradley for working hard with her home reading throughout this half term showing wonderful resilience and commitment! Our reading star!
Miss McGuckin	Brooke O’Shea - for her determination towards her reading this half term. Excellent dedication shown and always with such a lovely mindset - Well done!
Miss Quick	Finn Williams - For his excellent arithmetic score. Miss Quick and all the Year 6 staff are delighted.
Miss McGiveron	Max Pearson and Ivy Hird for being absolute superstars with their reading. They read diligently both inside and outside of school and are reading role models.
Mr Lynch	Sofia Heffernan - for her hard work and dedication to her reading this half term. She pushes and challenges herself constantly through her book choices. Well done!
Mrs Hough	Carlo Sheils- For showing determination to become the best he can be, at all times!

Snapchat

Snapchat is a popular social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. **You must be 13+ to sign up.** Users can send messages (snaps) to others that are only seen for a set time, and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours. Again, no pupil in St Moncia's should have Snapchat, and we have had several online incidents with this app in particular. It is dangerous and I would never allow my children to have this app having dealt with serious issues with it over many years.



Key Concerns

There are potential risks such as:

- **the risk of your child viewing content that is not appropriate for their age.**
- **location sharing(viaSnapMap).**
- **cyberbullying.**
- **contactfromstrangers.**
- **excessive screentime—children may have a fear of missing out (FOMO) as well as pressure to maintain “streaks”.**

“Disappearing” messages can lead to more risky behaviour and a “false sense of security.” These messages could be screenshot or another device used to take a photo, so they're not actually deleted as the sender believes. The image could then be shared.

Parental Controls / Safety settings

Snapchat's Family Centre is a set of parental controls and includes tools such as allowing you to:

- **see who your child is friends with.**
- **see who your child has sent messages (not the contents of conversations though), photos or videos to in the last week.**
- **view a list of group members for groups that your child has been active in.**
- **restrict content to limit access.**
- **report any accounts that you are concerned about.**

You can learn more about Family Centre here:

[Parent Centre](#)

If your child is using Snapchat, then make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up, including who can see their location and who can contact them. Also ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary:

[Privacy Centre Help](#)

More information

For more detailed advice and information:

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/snapchat>
- <https://parents.snapchat.com/safeguards-for-teens>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.01.26. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership or copyright in the content of the linked materials.

Family Smart Start

Family Smart Start is a free toolkit designed to help you and your child navigate the milestone of getting their first phone. The toolkit provides support on how to set up their new phone, how to talk to your child about digital safety and a template family agreement. Find out more here:

<https://familysmartstart.com/>

Cyber security

Cyber security is the process of protecting your information and data whilst online against scams and cyber-attacks. Cyber-attacks are the process of maliciously targeting individuals or organisations to disable networks or steal data for example.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have an area on their website with guidance to help protect you and your family. The guidance includes how to manage your digital footprint online, information about anti-virus software as well as top tips for staying online such as:

- Using a strong password
- Setting up 2 step verification

You can find the resources here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/advice-guidance/you-your-family>

The NCSC also provide advice on what you should do if you are the target of a scam or cyber-attack. Find out more here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/respond-recover/you>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version:
<https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/january-2026-primary/>

Online Safety Newsletter

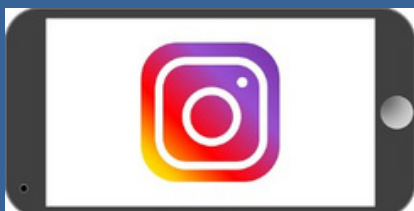
Instagram: You must be over 13 years of age to set up an account. Instagram is used to post photos and videos as well as send direct messages, make voice/video calls, and send disappearing messages.

Teen accounts are automatically set up for users aged 13 – 17. Instagram have announced that teens will now see content similar to content that they would see in a PG-13 movie.

Instagram have also updated their policies around content to include “hiding or not recommending posts with strong language, certain risky stunts, and additional content that could encourage potentially harmful behaviors”

Finally, for parents who would like to apply more stringent settings, Instagram are also introducing a new, stricter setting called ‘Limited Content.’ This setting will mean your child is not able to see, leave, or receive comments under posts as well.

You can read about the updates here: <https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/instagram-teen-content-safety-pg-13>



Playing games online

Does your child play games online? We have outlined some risks that you should consider:



Chatting to strangers / risk of inappropriate language

Some games will allow communication via text chat, direct messages or chatting. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off and/or the option to restrict bad language, so make sure settings appropriate to your child are applied. If your child is playing online with strangers, then you need to be aware that there is a risk of grooming. Some games do allow you to restrict communication to ‘friends only,’ however you would need to monitor that their online friends are real life friends. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players.

Cyberbullying

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they would not if they were face to face. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect. Other forms of cyberbullying whilst playing games could be excluding others, criticising the ability of other players and ganging up on others.

In app purchases

Many games include the option to purchase additional items/ subscriptions so ensure you do not have payment cards saved or set up restrictions/ a password to approve purchases.

What can I do?

Set up parental controls - as well as setting up appropriate parental Instagram Teen Accounts - update!

Chat to your child regularly about the risks above so that they are aware of what can happen online and remind them to always talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns

Further information

CEOP provides further guidance and support regarding this topic: <https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>
