Keeping Children Safe on the Internet

Oaklands Junior School believes in working with parents and pupils to ensure that they can use the Internet safely. We believe that the Internet is an incredible resource that allows the pupils to explore the world, find out about new things and chat and play games against friends. We want all of our children to be able to use the Internet safely, learn from it and have fun online.

We regularly teach our pupils about E-Safety using the SMART Code and we also share this with parents at our Parent Forums in the autumn term. The SMART code has been created by ChildNet, a charity helping children and parents to make informed decisions about their use of the Internet. The SMART Code teaches the following things:

Children, Online Communities and Social Networking

The Internet is a wonderful place for chatting and socialising with friends. However, there are a number of sites that offer the chance for children to chat to strangers. Obviously, this is something that we would totally avoid in the real world, so is something we feel should be avoided online, especially as it is much easier to lie when chatting online. For this reason, some sites put age restrictions on who can join. For many of the sites, these age restrictions are legally backed, especially if the site is hosted in America, as they have strict laws preventing them holding data about children aged under-13.

Below is a list of websites that your children may be interested in or you may hear them talking about, along with some information about the sites. Please be aware that we cannot be held accountable for your child's use of any of these websites and none of the content below should be taken as a recommendation or endorsement of any particular site. The information is provided based on the research we have carried out. If you feel that anything here needs to be updated, then please let us know.

PopJam

Pop Jam is an 'Online Creative Space for Kids' with app versions for Android and Apple products. The site is aimed at children aged 9+ and allows the children to create a page for themselves including stickers, photos and text; add friends; hold 1-2-1 chats and post things to each other's pages. All of the posts are monitored by moderators, even 1-2-1 chats, who will inform your child about anything that breaks their safety rules. Clearly we recommend that your child only makes friends with somebody that they know in real life.

In order to join, your child must have your consent to give their details to the site. Pop Jam is a registered company in England and their servers are hosted in England, meaning they must comply with the Data Protection Act 2004. For more information about Pop Jam's Safety, look at this link: http://www.popjam.com/safety/

Moshi Monsters

Moshi Monsters is a site owned by the same people who own PopJam. It is a site that allows children to create a Moshi Monster as well as do other things such as playing games, socializing with friends, designing their room, entering competitions, reading the blog, solving puzzles, tending to their garden and nurturing their little Monster. The site is aimed specifically at children and the basic version is free to join.

The site uses a list of allowed words in messages. Any words not in their allowed list are not permitted. The site also uses software to track inappropriate behaviour and live moderators to check on the children as they use the site.

In order to join, your child must have your consent to give their details to the site. Moshi Monsters is a registered company in England and their servers are hosted in England, meaning they must comply with the Data Protection Act 2004. For more information about Moshi Monsters, look at the following help area: http://www.moshimonsters.com/help

Bin Weevils

Bin Weevils is a site aimed specifically at children. They have the chance to create their very own Weevil, which is an avatar. With their avatar they can chat and socialise with friends, play games, watch cartoons, read books previews in the virtual library, enter competitions, create their own virtual business, and much more.

The site is KidSAFE certified and uses a team of live moderators as well as software and other systems to check content is appropriate. In order to join, your child must have your consent to give their details to the site. Bin weevils is a registered company in England and their servers are hosted in England, meaning they must comply with the Data Protection Act 2004. For more information, look at the following link: http://www.binweevils.com/parents_overview.php

Movie Star Planet

Movie Star Planet is a site aimed at children which allows them to express their creativity. They can earn and use StarCoins to buy costumes, backdrops, animations and other things. The site includes an online messaging system. The site has a team of live moderators who check content that is reported to them.

In order to join the site, the children must have parental consent. The site is based in Denmark and runs under Danish Law. The site complies with an equivalent of the UK Data Protection Act. For more information look at the following link: http://info.moviestarplanet.com/parents.aspx

Club Penguin

This is an online game, forum and chat area created by Disney. It allows your children to play games online, create online 'pets', create pages with information, chat on forums and chat with friends in 1-2-1 chats. Posts and chats are not generally monitored, though children are encouraged to report anything that they don't like.

In order to join, your child will need to provide your email address to them as verification of your consent. Club Penguin is registered in California and is governed under US Law. They have signed the EU-US Safe Harbor Agreement, meaning that they must comply with the Data Protection Act. For more information about Club Penguin's Children's Privacy Policy, look at this link: https://disneyprivacycenter.com/kids-privacy-policy/english/

Instagram

This is a site and app used by some children. It allows children to use an app installed on their phone, iPod or tablet to take a photo and post it instantly online. They can also use the app to send 'Direct Messages' to other users. Users can comment on and reply to comments on the photos. Nothing is moderated and photos are posted with embedded geotagging. Geotagging allows the exact location that the photo was taken to be plotted onto a map, e.g. Google Maps. Although there is an option to disable the geotag feature on Instagram, this just means that it doesn't show on the profile. If an anonymous user downloads the image they can still access the geotag from inside the image and find the exact location that the photograph was taken.

Instagram do not use 'secure' communication, meaning the hacking and hijacking of accounts in an everyday experience for users and user impersonation is a regular feature of the site.

In order to join Instagram, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of Instagram.

SnapChat

This allows users to take a quick photo and send it to a friend. The image is then deleted ten seconds later. Despite how wonderful this security sounds, there are a number of well-documented privacy issues. Firstly, the images are never actually properly deleted. This was proven a few month ago when hackers stole hundreds of thousands of images that had been reported as 'deleted'. Secondly, the SnapChat servers have been hacked several times, with personal information including users' full names and mobile phone numbers being published online. Finally, there is nothing within the app to prevent somebody taking a screenshot or saving the image in other ways before the image is deleted.

In order to join SnapChat, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of SnapChat.

SnapChat do a version of the app called SnapKidz. This is a local only version of the app that allows children to take photos and change them and use the tools of SnapChat but they cannot send the image anywhere – it stays on the user's device entirely.

Blackberry Messenger (BBM)

This is a chat service available to users of the popular Blackberry mobile phone. The system allows users to link together and form 'Channels' using their BBM 'PIN'. Many users publish their PIN live online allowing any users to link with them and send them messages. The messages are not moderated or checked and there is no facility for reporting abusive messages. BBM has been documented as being used for a huge range of things from fun chat and messages to cyber bullying and organisation of serious organised crime, e.g. the London riots.

BBM is run under British Law and uses servers hosted in the UK, meaning they comply with the Data Protection Act 2004.

BBM has a 'Minimum Age' of 13. Under the BBM terms, users aged under-13 cannot use the BBM service. Between the ages of 13 and 18 users must have parental consent to use the service.

Facebook

This is the largest and best known online community. It allows children to post images, status updates and posts onto a 'Wall'. They can befriend anybody they like and there is no monitoring of posts. There is the option to report posts, but it is well documented that Facebook rarely take action from reports of abuse.

In order to join Facebook, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of Facebook.

Twitter

This is another very well-known online community. Users can post short updates onto their feed as well as follow the posts of other users. Posts are tracked using hash-tags. Users can follow or be followed by any other user with very little control.

In order to join Twitter, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of Twitter.

WhatsApp

This is sold as an equivalent to texting – a free chat tool on mobile telephones which allows you to send private messages between known accounts. Messages are not monitored at all and once a user has linked via WhatsApp then they can always send messages.

In order to join WhatsApp, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 16+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-16 cannot be a member of WhatsApp.

Skype

Skype allows users to chat via instant messaging or via webcam and microphone to users all over the world. It is based on a friends list, though there are options to allow chat with anybody.

In order to open a Skype account, you must have reached the 'age of majority' in the country you are in to form the legally binding agreement with Skype. In the UK this means that **users must be aged 18+** to open a Skype account.

ooVoo

This is an online webcam chat system, similar to Skype. It allows users to use their webcam to chat online to other users as well as offering a 1-2-1 instant messaging system. You can chat to anybody you like, though there is an option to allow chat to friends only.

In order to join ooVoo, download or use the app **users MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of ooVoo.

Xbox Live and PlayStation Network

Both of these are versions of online gaming networks. Both Xbox and PlayStation of a huge variety of games suitable for children and many of these games offer an online aspect. In the online area of the games, there is usually a place to either send messages or even add headphones and a microphone and talk directly. Children often play against friends, but most games offer the chance to join a game server and play against anybody in the world. In order to join either of these communities, parents must accept the legal terms on behalf of children.

We are aware that many parents choose to allow their children to play games that are age-rated above their child's age. Clearly this is a personal choice for parents. We would like to point out that if your child plays these games online, they will be playing with a majority adult audience and language and the content of discussion will often reflect this. It is also quite easy for adults to manipulate children in these situations and there have been a number of well-documented cases of children being tricked into losing money, game credits or giving away personal details online whilst they are distracted playing games.

PBSKids

This is a games and educational website specifically designed for children. The children can create an account and parents can create a linked account. Through the site children can access and play games as well as download apps for Apple and Android tablets and phones.

The website is hosted in America. They haven't signed the 'Safe Harbour Agreement' meaning that they do not comply with the data protection policy. There is no minimum age for the site though children must have parent consent to create an account.

GirlsGoGames

This is a website aimed at girls to play games, play dress up and take part in crafts. The site is child focussed and does not require an account to access. If the child does want to create an account they must have parent consent if they are under-13. The site advises children to be aware of their own privacy and not give out personal information. The site is hosted in Europe so follows UK Data Protection requirements.

Kik

This is an online and app based chat system. It allows users to send private messages and photographs either over the internet or via mobile telephones. There is no monitoring of messages or reporting facility. The website is hosted in Canada and does not meet UK Data Protection requirements.

In order to join Kik, download or use the app users **MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of Kik.

Yik Yak

This is an app for mobiles and tablets that allows users to see what people nearby are saying and make anonymous posts. Posts then get upvoted and downvoted and if they reach -5 they are deleted. Although posts are displayed anonymously, Yik Yak keeps track of who is saying what and location information is broadcast in every post.

In order to join Yik Yak, download or use the app users **MUST be aged 13+**. This is a legal requirement of the company, governed under US Law. Even with parent consent, children aged under-13 cannot be a member of Yik Yak.