



Online Safety Newsletter

May 2021

Nintendo Switch

Did you know there is a free Parental Controls app that you can download to your phone to link to your child's Nintendo Switch? You will need to set up a Nintendo account first to use it but then you can:

- view a report to see what video games your child has been playing.
- see how long your child has been playing for and set time limits and what time they can play.
- set which games can be played based on their age rating.
- limit in game communication.
- restrict purchases in the Nintendo eShop.

Further information

- <https://www.nintendo.com/switch/parental-controls/>
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/nintendo-switch/>



Snapchat

Snapchat remains a popular app for messaging and sharing photos and videos. **You must be 13+ to sign up.** The app has some privacy settings which we would recommend you explore with your child and suggest why certain options are safer, for example, setting your account so only friends (rather than everyone) can see your content.



What should I be aware of?

- **Who is your child friends with** – talk to your child about who they are friends with and why it is safer to be friends with only those they know in real life.
- **Group chats** - in a group chat, there may be people that they're not friends with on the app who can then communicate with them in the group chat, which increases their risk of interacting with strangers.
- **Snap Map** - The map lets users see where friends are. Location sharing via the map is optional and is off by default (we recommend that it remains off).
- **Snapchat streaks** - Streaks count how many consecutive days two people have been sending Snaps to each other, this can increase pressure to respond daily.
- **Inappropriate content** – due to the nature of the app your child may come across content that is inappropriate.
- **Screenshots** – whilst Snaps disappear, users may take screenshots before they do, potentially resulting in them losing control of what they have shared as it could be sent to other people.
- **Bullying** – there is a risk of bullying on all platforms so please ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.
- <https://snap.com/safety/safety-reporting/>
- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/a/remove-block-friends>

Safety tips

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and make sure that they know that they should always talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns. **Please make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up and your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.**

- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2>

Further information

- Parents' Ultimate Guide to Snapchat: <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-snapchat>

Snapchat Safety Centre:
<https://snap.com/en-GB/safety/safety-center>

Houseparty

Houseparty is a face to face (video) social network available as either an app or web version. **You need to be 13+ to create an account**, however, no age verification takes place when you set up an account.

What is Houseparty?

It allows you to video chat with other users (your connections) as well as play in app quizzes and games with each other, it's designed to feel like a house party. Up to 8 people can join each room and you can join several rooms at any one time by swiping across.

How to lock rooms:

Once you are in a video chat (room), your connections and their connections can join the same video chat session regardless of whether you invite them or not **unless** you lock the room. So, if you do not lock the room, then a friend of one of your friends can join that video session. If somebody that isn't your connection is about to join, then you will receive a notice that they are joining the session. *We would recommend locking the room by simply tapping on the padlock at the bottom of the screen once everybody that you want is in the room/has joined the session.*

If you enable privacy mode, then every room you go into will automatically be locked.

Reporting

As with all apps, it's important that your child knows how to use the reporting tools within it. You can report direct to Houseparty if you see any inappropriate behaviour by tapping their name, then tap the "Friends" button and choose "Report" or "Report or Block". Ensure your child knows how to un-friend or block a person as well.

What you need to be aware of

- **In-app purchases:** One feature of Houseparty is the ability to play games and quizzes with your friends. These can be chargeable.
- **Content:** Other users may take screenshots/recordings of your private chats without you even realising and there is also the potential to see inappropriate content.
- **Strangers:** your child may encounter people they don't know (friends of friends).

Further information

- <https://houseparty.com/guidelines/>
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/houseparty/>

Roblox

What is Roblox?

You can either use Roblox to create games or play games that other users have created.

What should I be aware of?

Chat Facility - Players can chat to each other on Roblox. You can add parental controls to turn this feature off completely or add restrictions. Further information can be found here:

<https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>

Game content – as games are created by different users, sometimes the content may not be appropriate for your child.

Blocking users and reporting – ensure your child knows how to do this.

Virtual Currency - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories. If you do not want your child to purchase them ensure your card details are not saved.

Parental Controls

The game does include some parental controls so ensure appropriate controls are set up.

Further information:

- <https://corp.roblox.com/faq/>
- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-roblox-0>

Have you checked the age ratings?

When your children request to use a new app or game, it's important to evaluate whether it is appropriate for your child to use it. One of the **first things** we can do is check the age rating. If your child is not old enough then explain to your child, why it is not appropriate for them.