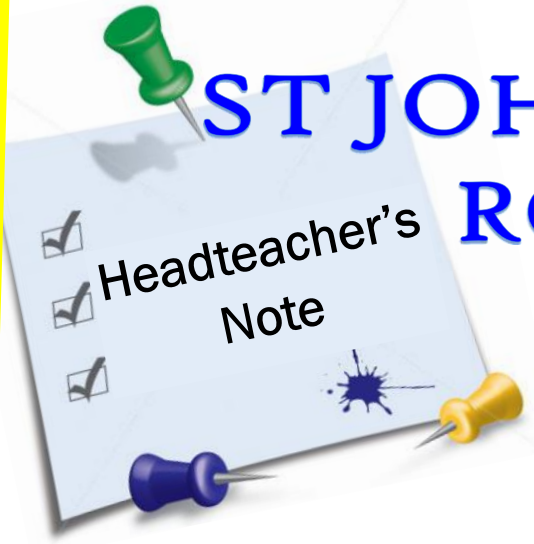
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST RCP SCHOOL



Weekly Newsletter
Friday 14th January 2022





Welcome back and we wish all our families and friends a Happy New Year. We sincerely hope that 2022 is filled with health and happiness for you all.

The children have settled back into school really well and there is a lovely atmosphere around the school. Although we are experiencing some level of difficulties due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, we are trying as hard as we can to keep to the normal school routine.

We are still experiencing high levels of COVID in school at the moment among staff and pupils. We have attached details of what tests are needed and the new isolation rules. Please could we ask you to help us stop the spread of COVID in school by not sending your child to school if they have any COVID symptoms. Anybody experiencing symptoms needs to book a PCR test.

Mrs McKeating will be out next week so please could you send any emails to office@st-john.lancs.sch.uk

Thank you.

Congratulations!

VIPS THIS WEEK

Year R	Jasmine Beck
Year 1	Harvey Banks
Year 2	Daisy Nuttall
Year 3	Niall Duffy
Year 4	Jaymieleigh Brooks
Year 5	Oscar Clarke
Year 6	Noah Walmsley



Writer of the Week



Year R	Benjamin Robinson
Year 1	Emma Lynch
Year 2	Ocean Sinclair
Year 3	Lilly-Mai Brittain
Year 4	Matilda Jackson
Year 5	Alana Riding
Year 6	Alfie Morley

Achievements!

A big well done to the following children for their achievements out of school;

Miley Stowe - dance
Ella Atkinson - ballet
Freddie Brand - football
Delilah Dalton - charity fundraising





CLASS DOJO WINNERS

Year 1	Pippa Beresford, Alfie Blanchard, Isla Barry, Rocco Storer, Lochlan Morris
Year 2	Noah Harrison, Ocean Sinclair, Hollie Melling, Georgia Ramshead, Luke Cavanagh
Year 3	Ava Tattersall, Emily Baines, Niall Duffy, Faith Morris, Ruby McWilliam
Year 4	Rafael Pinto, Jaymieleigh Brooks, Ava Hepper, Shay Greenwood, William Lord-Fallows
Year 5	Annaliese Coates, Andrea Lennox, Mason Pomfret, Toby Harter, Amelia Cumming
Year 6	Harvey Savage, Jessica Kelly, Jayden Sinclair, Joshua McGarvey, Theo Edwards

GOLDEN BOOK WINNERS



14th January 2022

Year 6	Logan Brown, Scarlet-Rose Murphy, Erin-Grace Whittle
Year 5	Grace Rushton, Alana Riding, Holly Mackey
Year 4	Riley Burbridge, Ayda-Rose Naylor, Lacey McNamara
Year 3	Mia Clarke, Ruby McWilliam, Brooklyn Thompson
Year 2	Seth Molyneux, Daniel Gargan, Phoebe Bridge
Year 1	Mason Brittain, Elsie McEvoy, Ria Green
Reception	Jake Benson, Nola Mannion, Jaxon Bernard

Mrs Taylor is collecting unwanted gifts to donate to Pendleside Hospice. If you would like to donate any items, please drop off at school office by next Wednesday 19th January. Thank you.

COVID-19 RULES FOR TESTING AND ISOLATION – JANUARY 2022

COVID-19 infection rates are very high in Padiham, and the new OMICRON variant is spreading rapidly.

Please help us to reduce spread in school by adhering to the following Government rules.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS COVID SYMPTOMS

ORIGINAL COVID SYMPTOMS:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss or change to your sense of smell and taste

The new OMICRION variant is more commonly showing the following symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Sneezing

1) If your child develops any COVID symptoms, do not send them to school. Self-isolate straight away and book a PCR test (A test that is sent to a lab).

2) Inform school, as soon as possible, that your child is isolating and awaiting a PCR result.

3) If the result is positive your child will need to isolate for 10 days. Isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days. *(They may be able to leave isolation early if they have 2 negative lateral flow tests on day 5 and 6.)*

4) If the test is negative, they can return to school as soon as they feel well enough.
IF YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 YOU MUST EMAIL THE PCR RESULT TO SCHOOL SO WE CAN ENSURE OUR ATTENDANCE RECORDS ARE CORRECT.

WHEN DOES ISOLATION END?

Isolation stops after 10 days. However, if your child still has a high fever and feels unwell, they should continue to isolate, and you should contact your GP.

Your child can stop isolating ON DAY 6 if you have had a negative lateral flow on the morning of day 5 and day 6.

- Both tests are negative
- Tests were done 24 hours apart
- Your child does not have a high temperature and is feeling well
- The first test was done on day 6 and not before

If on day 6 the rapid lateral flow test is positive your child must continue to isolate until they get to consecutive negative tests 24hours apart.

PLEASE CONTACT SCHOOL TO INFORM US THAT YOUR CHILD HAS HAD 2 NEGACTIVE LATERAL FLOWS AND IS RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

CAN MY CHILD COME TO SCHOOL IF A FAMILY MEMBER HAS COVID?

YES. If your child does not have any symptoms of COVID they are not required to isolate and can come to school.

They are, however, strongly advised to:

1) Take a rapid lateral flow test every day for 7 days. Do the test in the morning before they attend school.

2) If the lateral flow test is positive, they must start to isolate immediately and not attend school.

OTHER ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL.

- In law every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that their child attends full-time education *(section 7 of the Education Act 1996)*.
- If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, you must contact the school at the start of the school day and explain why your child can not attend school.
- If you need to collect your child for an appointment you must show your appointment card to the office.

DAYS	NEW ISOLATION RULES
0	SYMPTOMS BEGIN OR TEST TAKEN IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS, YOU MUST TAKE A PCR.
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	BEGIN HOME TESTING
6	SELF ISOLATION CAN END WHEN YOU HAVE 2 NEGATIVE LATERAL FLOW TESTS 24 HOURS APART. (EARLIEST IS DAY 6) KEEP TESTING EVERY DAY UNTIL YOU GET 2 LATERAL FLOWS THAT ARE NEGATIVE
7	
8	
9	
10	ISOLATION ENDS AS LONG AS YOU ARE WELL AND DON'T HAVE A TEMPERATURE, YOU CAN END ISOLATION EVEN IF YOUR LATERAL FLOW IS POSTIVE

Online Safety

We are aware that many children have received gifts this Christmas that involve online activities. Some have access to online gaming, or social media sites or the use of Netflix, YouTube, or other video channels. May we remind you that as parents it is your responsibility to ensure that you set up the correct firewalls and family settings on the individual devices and your broadband settings to make sure that our primary school children only have access to age-appropriate material. This is classed as a safeguarding issue for those with parental responsibility.

As a school we really do not want to be dealing with the trauma of some children as young as Reception having knowledge of inappropriate film or game content or other children having this content described to them in detail.

Could we also ask parents to similarly set up appropriate restrictions on smart watches and Fitbits? These should not have an active camera or other recording settings switched on and they should be set to flight mode during school hours. While we appreciate these items are now a part of everyday life for many adults, we will review our school policies if they are misused by our older pupils.

We hope you find the following information posters useful.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one topic of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

The 12 Online Safety Tips of Christmas

FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES





Christmas is almost upon us once again, and soon some lucky children will be excitedly tearing the wrapping off a new mobile phone, tablet or games console. For some of them, it will be the first time they've owned a device that connects them to the online world. Even for older children, a new device means new corners of the digital landscape to explore – and, unfortunately, new risks to be aware of.

We've put together our top tips so that you can guide your young ones in enjoying their new digital gifts safely and responsibly throughout the year to come.
Merry Christmas!

1. ALWAYS SET A PASSWORD

If your child's new device has a password protection feature, use it! It'll help to keep their private information safe and will deny others access to their device without permission. Your children's passwords should be something memorable to them – but something which other people can't guess (it's also a good idea for parents to write it down in case it gets forgotten!).

2. SET UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS'

This really is an essential when your child gets a new device, so they're protected from the outset. Most phones, tablets and consoles allow you to customise their settings to determine which games your child can play, how they can communicate (and who with), what content they can access and so on. It will give you peace of mind that they can't inadvertently do something they shouldn't.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO AGE RATINGS

18+

One of the first things children want to do with any new device is play games and explore apps. Before they download anything or install a new console game, check its age rating. Many popular games and apps have content that's not suitable for younger ages. The safest long-term solution is to adjust the device's settings so they can only download and use games and apps appropriate for their age.

4. KEEP NUMBERS AND DEVICES PRIVATE

Make sure your child understands that they should never share their phone number with someone they don't know or accept a friend request from them. They should also appreciate that it's a good idea to mainly keep their device out of sight, never lend it to a stranger, and never put it down somewhere that other people could steal it or take it to use without asking.

5. HAVE 'THE MONEY CONVERSATION'

Before your children start using their new device in earnest, talk to them about in-app purchases and other ways that money might be spent through their device. Once they understand, you might want to agree on a spending limit and reassure them that they can come to you if they're uncertain, or if they have made a purchase by accident.

6. DISCOURAGE DEVICE DEPENDENCY

Of course, children who've just got a new device will naturally want to spend as much time on it as possible. But whether they're zapping bad guys, watching videos or connecting with friends, it's easy for them to get attached very quickly. Gently remind them that having family time, going outdoors and getting some exercise are still fun, too. And the device will be there when they get back.

7. EXPLAIN SECURE WIFI NETWORKS

Your home WiFi is protected by a password that only your family knows, whereas public networks (like those found in coffee shops, for example) can be accessed by anyone. It's important that your child grasps this difference because, if they're using a portable device on an unsecured network, then a hacker could access their personal information without them even knowing.

8. LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Using a device for too long, especially just before bed, can interfere with a child's sleep quality and reduce their concentration and overall enthusiasm. It might be helpful to agree on certain times of day when they don't use their device. Most devices' settings let you specify a screen-time limit, helping your child to stay fresh and focused in order to perform well at school.

9. ONLY PAIR WITH KNOWN BLUETOOTH DEVICES

Your child may want to connect to another device via Bluetooth, so they can listen to music wirelessly or share pictures and videos with nearby friends. But if they use Bluetooth to link with a device that they don't know, they're at risk of a stranger being able to see their personal information or having someone transmit a virus onto their device.

10. TURN LOCATION SETTINGS OFF

It's safest to disable the device's location services (if it's a portable device) so your child doesn't inadvertently make other people aware of where they are. You can usually do this via the device's privacy control settings. Turning location settings off not only means your child's whereabouts can't be tracked by others, it also significantly extends battery life.

11. STAY AWARE OF THE SURROUNDINGS

It's quite common to see adults not looking where they're going while engrossed in their phone. Children are even more easily distracted. In some cases, children have been hit by cars or cyclists because they were staring at their device and lost track of where they were. Remind your child that screens and walking don't mix. If they need to use their device, they should stop in a safe place first.

12. BE THERE IF THEY NEED TO TALK

Even when you've made a device as secure as you can, there's still a possibility of your child seeing something that bothers them, or someone they don't know attempting to contact them. If this happens, listen to their concerns, empathise and reassure them. Once they've explained what happened, you can decide if you should take further action like blocking or reporting another user.



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What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS

If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.

RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

- **U** – Universal, suitable for all ages
- **PG** – Parental Guidance required
- **12** – Suitable for people aged 12 and over
- **12A** – Suitable for people aged 12 and over; anyone younger must be accompanied by an adult
- **15** – Suitable for people aged 15 and over
- **18** – Suitable for people aged 18 and over
- **R18** RESTRICTED – Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers

WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

Source: www.bbfc.co.uk

RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

3 www.pegi.info | 7 www.pegi.info | 12 www.pegi.info | 16 www.pegi.info | 18 www.pegi.info

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:



LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: www.pegi.info

National Online Safety
A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com
Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

1 PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.



2 PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES

You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

3 PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES

For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.

4 THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES



As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the internet.



5 MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER



Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the Internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.

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9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6 REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS

Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.

7 DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE



Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.

8 WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.



9 KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.



Meet our expert



Emma Davis was a secondary school Computer Science teacher for more than decade. Since leaving education, she has been working in a cyber security firm delivering cyber awareness training to businesses and carrying out network testing. She is a mother of a five-year-old, she's had vast experience of controlling and managing how children access online services and use apps.





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What parents need to know about YOUTUBE

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EASY TO ACCESS

Any child with a Gmail account can sign into YouTube & access videos. Some content is flagged 'age-restricted', but the platform relies on self-verification, meaning kids can get around the rules with a fake date of birth. This could enable access to vulgar, violent & dangerous videos.

USERS CAN PRIVATELY CONTACT YOUR CHILD

When your child is signed-in to YouTube with their Gmail account, there are various ways they can send & receive messages. This could be via the messages icon, or via the 'About' tab. There is scope here for users who your child does not know to make contact.

YOUTUBE SUGGESTS RELATED CONTENT

YouTube will often 'auto play' videos based on your child's viewing habits. The aim is to show related & appropriate content. But the problem is: it's possible your child will be exposed to inappropriate content that isn't accurately related.

'CHALLENGE VIDEOS' CAN GO TO FAR

Challenge videos refer to a stunt you're encouraged to recreate & film. Many challenge videos can be harmless & for a good cause, like the Ice Bucket Challenge. But some are dangerous & even life threatening, such as the Bird Box Challenge.



SHARING VIDEOS RISKS YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY

If your child has a Google account, they can upload their own videos. To do this, they must create a personal profile page known as a 'YouTube Channel'. The videos uploaded here can be viewed, commented on & shared by anyone. This could put your child's privacy at risk.



Tips To Protect Your Child

APPLY 'RESTRICTED MODE'

Restricted mode helps to hide any mature or unpleasant videos from your children. It uses YouTube's own automated system & looks at what other users flag as inappropriate content. It must be enabled in the settings menu on each individual device.

CHANGE WHO CAN SEE VIDEOS

You can change who can view your child's content in the settings. Options include Public (available to all), Private (only available to people you share it with & cannot be shared) or Unlisted (available to people you share it with & can be shared further).



BLOCK CONCERNING USERS

To help protect your child from cyber-bullies, harassment or persistent offensive comments, you can 'block' individual users. Doing so hides your child's videos from the user & stops the user being able contact your child in any way.

CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE

Influence & control what your child watches using features such as Playlists (your videos play continuously rather than videos YouTube recommends) & Subscriptions (you choose channels your child can watch). It's also good to turn off auto play by toggling the blue button alongside the 'Up Next' title when viewing a video.

CREATE A 'FAMILY' GOOGLE ACCOUNT

Create a Google account to be used by the whole family. This will allow you to monitor exactly what your child is watching, uploading & sharing. Plus, your child's YouTube page will display their recently watched videos, searches, recommended videos & suggested channels.



GET YOUR OWN ACCOUNT

Create your own account so you can explore features yourself. Learn how to flag inappropriate videos, how to moderate comments & how to block users. This will help you feel more confident when providing advice & guidance to your children.

BE MINDFUL OF CYBERBULLYING

Once your child has posted a video, a worldwide audience can see it. Strangers may choose to comment on the video, both positively & negatively. So, be careful to check comments & any other interactions your child is making through the platform.



GET TO KNOW POPULAR CHANNELS

It's good to know which channels are most popular with your children. Some of the most popular channels right now are: PewDiePie, NigaHiga, Zoella, KSI, JennaMarbles, Markiplier, Smosh, ThatcherJoe & Casper Lee.

DON'T ASSUME YOUR CHILD IS TOO YOUNG

YouTube and YouTube Kids are quickly becoming the chosen viewing platforms for children between the ages of 3-15 & it's likely this trend will only increase. It's also possible children will become familiar with the platform at a younger & younger age. So it's important to understand the positives & negatives of the platform.



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Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



SOURCES: https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/1350409, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6401182, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802272?hl=en-GB, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/7354993?hl=en-GB, https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/yt/about/policies/#community-guidelines, https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/134907/Children-and-Parents-Media-Use-and-Attitudes-2018.pdf, https://www.raisingdigitalnatives.com/youtube-parenting/, https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/youtube/, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jan/16/youtube-bans-dangerous-pranks-after-bird-box-challenge

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NINTENDO SWITCH

The Switch is a hybrid console released by popular video game company Nintendo in 2017. It's classed as a hybrid because it's designed to be played both at home on a television, like traditional consoles (think a PlayStation or an Xbox) or out and about like a portable console, such as a GameBoy. It uses two detachable and wireless 'Joy-Con' controllers on either side of the console's screen, which can be used by one or two players. The Switch can be played on the internet with the purchase of Nintendo Switch Online, in the living room together or on the go during long journeys, but bear in mind it needs to be charged just like anything else!

AGE RECOMMENDATION 6+



What parents need to know about NINTENDO SWITCH



NINTENDO SWITCH ONLINE

Nintendo Switch Online is a paid service that allows the console to be played (you guessed it) online, by linking to other Switch consoles around the world. It can be purchased through the Nintendo eShop for a single account on the device, or with a family membership plan which covers 2 accounts. The purchase options come in three tiers; 1 month, 3 months and 12 months but be aware these auto-renew unless you specify otherwise.

ONLINE DANGERS

While online, your children will be able to play with and chat to people on compatible games, which will mostly be good-natured fun, but could potentially expose them to vulgar language, indecent images or worse. There are options to limit this though, which are detailed below. It's worth remembering that many games can be played offline, so while it's not essential to get Nintendo Switch Online, it is certainly something to consider.

NINTENDO eSHOP

The Nintendo eShop is where games can be purchased over the internet and downloaded directly onto the device. If you choose to enter your bank details (or PayPal account) onto the Switch, you can save them for easy access later on. Do note however that these can be viewed by anybody with access to the console, unless you specify otherwise. A child might accidentally purchase a game or item from the shop if these details are left improperly protected, which could leave you with a nasty surprise.

NINTENDO'S VIDEO GAME SELECTION

Nintendo as a company offers some of the most entertaining and safe video games on the market. Games featuring characters like Super Mario, Donkey Kong and Yoshi are always a safe bet for a child-friendly experience. It's always prudent to check each game before you buy it (especially if the game hasn't been made by Nintendo) but as a rule of thumb, anything official containing well-known names like these will be great for your children, giving you peace of mind while they enjoy them.

PORTABLE GAMING

Being able to take the Switch anywhere is a huge bonus when travelling. What's more is that almost every game can be enjoyed without the need to 'dock' the console with a television. Battery life on the Switch varies depending on what it's being used for but typically it will last around 3 or 4 hours before needing to be recharged. When the time comes, any USB-C charger will be able to do the job, but it's best and quickest to return it to the dock, which requires a normal plug socket.

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Top Tips For Parents

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Nintendo released a free downloadable app that can be used in tandem with the Switch called Nintendo Switch Parental Controls. Once you've got the app on your mobile device, it's a simple process to pair your two devices, giving you a suite of options to help make sure your child is having fun in a safe and structured environment curated by you.

ONLINE RESTRICTIONS

Another major inclusion in the app is the ability to block your child from seeing anything to do with age restricted games. There's also an extremely helpful feature that restricts access to games that have free communication features between strangers on the internet. This includes things like private messages and unsolicited images. Should you be concerned that strangers might be using the games to talk to your child, a simple press of a button will disallow any access they might have.

PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD

One of the wonderful things about the Switch is that there are an abundance of great games you and your child can enjoy together, and even with the whole family. Nintendo has a long history of making and supporting fun, family friendly games like Mario Kart and Mario Party, both of which can be played with two or more players using the Joy-Con controllers.

NINTENDO ESHOP SETTINGS

In the Nintendo eShop you can set up a password to help stop your child or somebody else from accessing any sensitive information, such as bank account details. The options here include entering a password to access the eShop to begin with, when any saved credit card information access is attempted, or when PayPal is accessed. Choosing which areas are password protected helps ensure you're deciding what level of access is given on the device. For example, if you're happy to have your child browse the shop for games they might want, you can allow access to the eShop but introduce the password before a purchase is made ensuring no mishaps occur.

LIMITING PLAY TIME

By linking the app with the Nintendo Switch, you can set time limits and reminders when you think enough time has been spent playing. It also lets you see if a game is still being played and gives you the option to automatically put the console into sleep mode if the message is ignored. This should only be used as a last resort though as it could cause some friction between you!

SET PLAY TIMES

Another handy feature is the ability to set different playtimes for days of the week, allowing you to tailor play time around you and your child's schedules. This is great for setting boundaries and encouraging gaming as part of a healthy routine. It will also help your child organise with their friends when they can all be online.

SEE PLAY HISTORY

The Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app can also send a report telling you how much time your child spends playing each game. This is a great way to spot their favourite or most played games and might be a nice way for you to find out more about a title before talking to your child about it. It could also help identify any possible issues around playtime before they arise.

Meet our expert



Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

https://www.nintendo.com/switch/system/, https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Support/Parents/Safety/Keeping-your-child-safe/How-does-Nintendo-keep-your-child-safe--888083.html, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLdWHOW9zqc, https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Nintendo-Switch/Nintendo-Switch-Online/Nintendo-Switch-Online-1183143.html

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