

# ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER.



## SMARTPHONES VS FEATURE PHONES?

[Smartphones vs dumb phones guide for parents | Internet Matters](#)

The debate around smartphone use in childhood is growing, with some schools, including some Hertfordshire, starting to ban phones. There is also increased discussion about feature phones as safer alternatives. Internet Matters has created a helpful guide to compare options.



[EE launches age guidance for smartphone usage in drive to improve children's digital wellbeing](#)

In August 2024 it was announced that EE were launching new age guidance for smartphone usage, addressing growing concerns about children's online safety and the effects of device usage on their overall wellbeing.

The age guidance suggests:

**Under 11:** Use non-smart devices like feature phones with texting and calling capabilities, restricting access to social media and inappropriate content.

**Aged 11-13:** Smartphones can be used with parental controls and a family-sharing app (e.g., Google Family Link or Apple Family Sharing), while limiting social media access.

**Aged 13-16:** Smartphones are appropriate with parental controls to manage access to content and platforms; social media is allowed but should be linked to a parent or guardian's account.

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## THE ABC ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST



Internet Matters have created an age-related ABC checklist for online safety:

A= Activate parental controls

B= Balance screen time

C= Check and chat

*'We've broken down the ABCs by age to help you manage your individual child's online safety.'*

[Use the ABC online safety checklist for parents | Internet Matters](#)

## GAMING TIPS FOR PARENTS OF NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN.

Internet Matters has published a helpful guide – focussing on online gaming safety tips for parents and carers of neurodivergent children. The simple 5-page guide covers research, examples of suitable games, some of the challenges parents face, and the key benefits.

The guide can be accessed [here](#)

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## DISCORD CHATROOM

There are growing concerns around content and conduct in the Discord chatrooms. Discord is a platform that hosts chat rooms dedicated to individual games including Fortnite. In a recent investigative report ‘**Why gaming still has a woman problem**’ by Sky News, it was reported that ‘*There’s no way to report Discord users for comments they make in voice chat.*



*There is for text-based conversations, but that is not how many gamers use Discord.’*

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/abc-online-safety-checklist/>

If your child is using chatrooms whilst gaming, Kids Online World has created a brief overview for parents and carers

[Discord - KIDSONLINEWORLD.COM](#)

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The information in the newsletter is given to help promote the safety of children and young people online.

Every care has been taken to ensure the information and any recommendations in the newsletter are accurate at the time of publishing. Schools must make their own judgements when sharing our recommendations with parents and carers and, where appropriate, always risk assess with their pupils and whole school community in mind.

This newsletter is brought to you by the HFL Education Wellbeing team as part of their online safety support for schools and settings in Hertfordshire. Contact the team at [wellbeing@hfleducation.org](mailto:wellbeing@hfleducation.org) or call 01438 544464.

HFL Education is a leading national provider of school improvement and business support services, training, and resources, which enable schools, educational settings and multi-academy trusts to deliver a great education.

We support those we work with to achieve successful long-term outcomes for their children.

We believe that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live, their background or circumstances.

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