



THE PRIORY ACADEMY

LSST

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Today's hints and tips focus on some of the most used apps and programs that young people are currently using. We hope this will help keep you as informed as possible about the ever-changing landscape of the online world:

1. **Snapchat:** Snapchat has faded in and out of popularity over the years, but has resurged amongst teenagers with the addition of photograph filters, which can change your appearance through lighting and face recognition. Below are two of the biggest risks of using Snapchat:
  - The 'Snap Maps' feature lets children share their exact location in real-time through a map on the app. The user's location updates when the app has been opened on the device. We highly recommend enabling 'Ghost Mode' in the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map.' To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, change the setting to 'Ghost Mode.'
  - Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and text disappear eventually, yet users still can screenshot or record anything which has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is possible and send a compromising image or message somebody who they think they trust. Therefore, when there are issues with children and young people sending sexually explicit images or 'selfies', or images used to bully or cause upset, Snapchat is the platform that is most commonly used. You are most likely aware it is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos, and videos that a child may have taken of themselves. If your child comes across anything that makes them uncomfortable, they should:
    - i. Block the person contacting them;
    - ii. Report the incident to Snapchat;
    - iii. If the problem continues then they should gather evidence with screenshots and hand this to an appropriate adult or an agency such as Childnet.
2. **WhatsApp** – WhatsApp has become one of the centres for all one-to-one and group chat conversations, allowing text, call and video chat capabilities between anyone who has a WhatsApp account. Lots of children are part of group chats with their friends and can be in multiple groups at once. This can lead to complications with cyberbullying taking hold in some of these groups. If your child is part of a group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable or

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has been added to a group of which they don't want to be part, use the group's settings to show them how to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once. If they leave again, they cannot be added again. If your child continues to receive spam or offensive messages, calls or attachments, they should block them. To block a contact, your child needs to open the person's chat stream and tap on the person's name and select Block Contact.

3. Roblox – Roblox currently has 1.5 million children users in the UK who can create their games and 'worlds' for other users to play on the platform. It gives everyone the freedom to create, which can lead to players creating content you do not wish them to access. There is currently no age-restrictions on Roblox meaning anyone has access to an account. Recently there have been reports of online grooming, explicit content and depictions of murder found within Roblox. Although Roblox has a staff of 1,700 to deal with content creation this will not stop those wishing harm to children to do so. We advise that no social media accounts are linked to Roblox so children's real-world identities are protected. You can also disable in-game chat by going into account settings and clicking on the gear icon at the top-right, click settings and then find the privacy tab, under "Who can chat with me in this game?" and select "No one".

We hope that these tips are useful to you and we thank you for your continued support in keeping all children safe online.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Donaldson  
Online Safety Team

# **What should I do if I am being bullied or harassed online?**

1. Block the person.
2. Report the incident to the hosting website/app.
3. If the problem continues then gather screenshot evidence and hand this to an appropriate adult such as a parent or teacher or an appropriate agency such as Childnet. You should also do this if the incident causes you upset or distress.