

# Online Safety Newsletter

December 2024



## Smartphones

The debate around smartphone use in childhood is growing with increased concern for children's mental health from using social media. Osidge has joined the Barnet Smartphone Free Childhood Campaign which is working to delay the age in which children get a smartphone so that they are not exposed to harmful online content at a young age. There is a useful guidance from the Smartphone Free Childhood Campaign about safer alternatives to smartphones.: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

EE has also launched age guidance for smartphone usage to improve children's digital wellbeing 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.

<https://newsroom.ee.co.uk/ee-launches-age-guidance-for-smartphone-usage-in-drive-to-improve-childrens-digital-wellbeing/#:~:text=EE's%20guidance%20for%2013%2D16,sites%2C%20content%2C%20and%20platforms.>

## AI

With technology ever changing, it can be difficult to keep up to date with new technologies and know if there are any risks associated. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being talked about a lot, so it is worthwhile learning more about it now to help support/answer questions if our children show an interest. Twinkl provides a great overview of AI here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/parents-guide-top-tips-for-navigating-generative-ai-safely-with-kids>

## My child wants to be a YouTuber...

Many children want to start their own YouTube channel but it is important to be aware of the potential risks and ensure that your child understands what information they should keep private and what to do if they receive negative comments. YouTube has created safety tips for teens when posting content online. This can be found using the following link: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802244>

Parents and carers should also be aware that there are different settings available when posting videos:

**Public:** anyone can view the video. **Private:** video can only be viewed by users that you select. **Unlisted:** only people who have the link to the video can view it.

There are many positives to allowing your child to start a YouTube channel, such as giving them a creative outlet and developing their IT skills; however, there are also negatives, such as cyberbullying.

The full article and recommendations to help minimise any risks can be found here:

<https://www.brightcanary.io/should-your-kid-become-a-youtuber-weighing-the-pros-and-cons/>

