



Widford Lodge Preparatory School



Online Education Booklet

Updated September 2021





Introduction From The Headteacher

I hope that you will find this guide to Widford Lodge School's digital learning programme helpful. We recognise that online learning from home can be an anxious time for our families and we have put together this guide to support you and your children if our school has to close again during the pandemic Covid-19 crisis. Our priority is to provide the very best possible education at this time, via a blend of virtual lessons via video link, the ability for pupils to interact directly with their teachers and the facility to view, complete, submit and receive feedback on assignments. The staff will be available 'live' through the academic lessons to allow pupils to ask questions about their work and teach new content.

In this guide, you will find an outline of our online learning timetable and other important academic routines. To balance the screen time, there will be creative offerings in the afternoons, to provide further fun and enriching activities. A broad and varied curriculum is important, and the children will be able to enjoy blocks of lessons in Art, Music and Humanities in the afternoons. Some individual music lessons will take place during this time too, so please do contact our Subject Leader of Music, Mrs Naomi Poole npoole@widfordlodge.co.uk if you have further questions. While routine is very important for the children, and we do encourage them to follow their timetable wherever possible, we also understand the need for flexibility, to fit with your family's needs. Breaks and lunchtimes are important times for relaxation with the family where possible, we recommend that that this is non-screen time and devices are turned off.

If you have any questions or require support, in the same way as usual, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant member of staff. All academic questions should be raised with the teachers in the first instance or via the specific Subject Leaders and the Deputy Head (Academic), Mr Ed Callaway ecallaway@widfordlodge.co.uk

In this booklet, we provide clear guidance around our pastoral care and wellbeing support, which we will continue to provide to our pupils. You will find some important guidance for e-safety too. During this time of change and anxiety, it is essential for pupils to feel that they can discuss things that are important to them with the staff and with each other. Form tutors will have live interactions with pupils on a daily basis and we will be setting PSHEE assignments in the timetable. Please contact our Deputy Head (Pastoral), Mrs Sam Pawsey spawsey@widfordlodge.co.uk if you have any questions or require further support.

We, of course, hope to remain open and for school to operate as normally as possible. However, in uncertain times, we must now use technology to our advantage for learning and be aware of what we can do, should a return to lockdown be necessary. We recognise how important our families' support and positive engagement at home with Widford Lodge's online learning is and we are hugely appreciative of your support.

I wish you all continued good health during these unprecedented times. As always, I am here for any queries or concerns – please contact me via email headteacher@widfordlodge.co.uk if you have any questions or require further support.



Academic

The last two years the world has faced many challenges and we all have had to readjust to a new way of doing things and adapting as best as we can. Having had two lockdowns where school has been closed and various situations where virtual learning has been needed at home, while school was open, we have continued to evaluate what we do and are constantly seek to do better for our pupils and parents. Using our experiences through these moments and listening to feedback from pupils and parents, a great deal of planning has continued to take place to implement an academic and pastoral programme that we feel confident is robust and supportive for everyone: pupils, parents and staff. More importantly, it has allowed our pupils to still make progress in challenging circumstances. In true Widford spirit, we continue to persevere and rise to challenges.

We are hopeful that many of you will feel reassured in knowing more about **Widford Lodge's Online Education programme** that was put in place previously and has continued to evolve into this academic year.

Inevitably, by having to interact remotely, much of our provision was reliant on IT and we knew this was a concern to some parents. While operating in this way was new to the teaching staff too, we endeavoured to make things as easy for the parents and pupils as possible. Flexibility and finding what works best for each household, is what we strive to do.

Our families are now quite well rehearsed at using Microsoft Teams, which we will continue to use this year for the occasional homework task, for work completed on computers in school, for any situation where someone has to self-isolate or school closure. We also have from before, a variety of instructions, tutorial videos and other support we can offer.

One great lesson that we have all learnt in these circumstance, is how wonderfully adaptable children are, and how often, they can rise to the challenges quickly, responding well to the expectations of staff.

As we have always maintained, through the programme it was important to not let your attempts to motivate your child to work lead to tears (theirs or yours). Liaising with the teacher was an important part of helping you or your child, if they were not responding or struggling. This is something we would encourage again in the future. If you have any questions or queries about anything that is included here, please do not hesitate to contact your child's form teacher or the Deputy Head (Academic), Ed Callaway

ecallaway@widfordlodge.co.uk.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



Pastoral Care

We are very much keen to stay connected with the children during any Virtual Learning experiences, albeit from a distance. It goes without saying that we want to do everything that we can to support both the pupils and yourselves as we all continue to adapt to new ways of working. Our focus on pastoral care remains as strong as ever. Indeed, our strong sense of community and our core values - respect, perseverance, resilience and rising to new challenges – are as relevant as ever during times of remote learning, and our supportive, caring and nurturing environment is still very much available to the pupils. Our intention is that our remote systems will allow all pupils to feel that they are involved, listened to and informed.

As previously mentioned, the children's form tutors will continue to play an important role during this time of online learning. Form tutors will check in with pupils on a daily basis, and offer them the opportunity to discuss things that are important to them. At this uncertain time, it is essential that the children continue to talk, both to the adults in the school and to their wider support network. PSHEE, delivered by the form tutors, will continue to play an important part of the curriculum. Much of the time will be devoted to discussing issues that affect mental health.

There will inevitably be some children who find it easier to talk via messages rather than face-to-face. Form tutors will happily respond to messages sent via Teams. Alternatively, if they wanted to send a message to another teacher, they have the use of the 'chat' function in Teams to contact any teacher.

The whole team is here to support parents too. We recognise that this is a daunting time, so please do get in touch if you need help with structuring the day or encouraging your children to settle to work. Staff will support you wholeheartedly: we all share the common goal of giving your children the very best possible education at this time. If you would appreciate some guidance, please contact your child's form tutor directly, or email your questions or concerns to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) Sam Pawsey at spawsey@widfordlodge.co.uk



Applications that are needed for our online delivery

The main tool that we used was Microsoft Office 365, specifically Teams and we will continue with this.

- **Microsoft Teams** will continue to be used for communication and collaboration between teachers and pupils/parents, in the form of virtual lessons, setting of assignments and use of the 'chat' function.
- **Purple Mash** will continue to be used as a tool for completing some assignment tasks.

Microsoft Teams will be used for online delivery in two ways. The event of school closure and for situations of a positive case of Covid 19 and the need to self-isolate due to this. Therefore, all children need to have access to Microsoft Teams in order to communicate with their teachers, access virtual lessons, access assignments and to receive feedback on work completed.

In the event of the need to self-isolate, Reception and Year 1 parents will receive a daily email from the form tutor, providing instructions, work and activities for the pupil to be doing at home. For all other year groups, the day after a confirmed positive case, parents will also receive an email from the form tutor with work for that particular day. After one school day, Year 2 pupils will then be able to access daily virtual lessons for Maths and English, as well as some other assignments, through using Microsoft Teams. After one school day, Pupils in the Prep school will be able to access daily virtual lessons for Maths and English, as well as virtual lessons for the Humanities. They will also have assignments for every other subject. All these virtual lessons and setting of assignments across the school, will follow the usual school timetable. This can be found at the back of their planners for those in the Prep School. All work should be completed in their Online Learning exercise books and then returned to school for marking and feedback. Rest assured, we will also be able to make up for any lost learning in the classroom on their return as well. Please note that these provisions are only provided once there is a confirmed positive case for a child or within a household that is now choosing to self-isolate due to this. While awaiting for results of PCR tests, these will be treated as illness days where we do not provide work at home.

In the event of school closure, Teachers in Years 3-6 will continue to deliver the education programme by following the normal programmes of study, although this will have been lightened slightly. This will ensure that there is continuity across the various year groups, particularly for the core subjects of Maths and English.

In the event of school closure, teachers in Reception-Year 2 will also conduct two virtual meeting sessions a day, across the week and set daily tasks and work in accordance with the normal programmes of study, but of course this may be adapted somewhat to aid younger children who find the use of technology more challenging. There will also have an MFL and Music lesson



Microsoft Teams

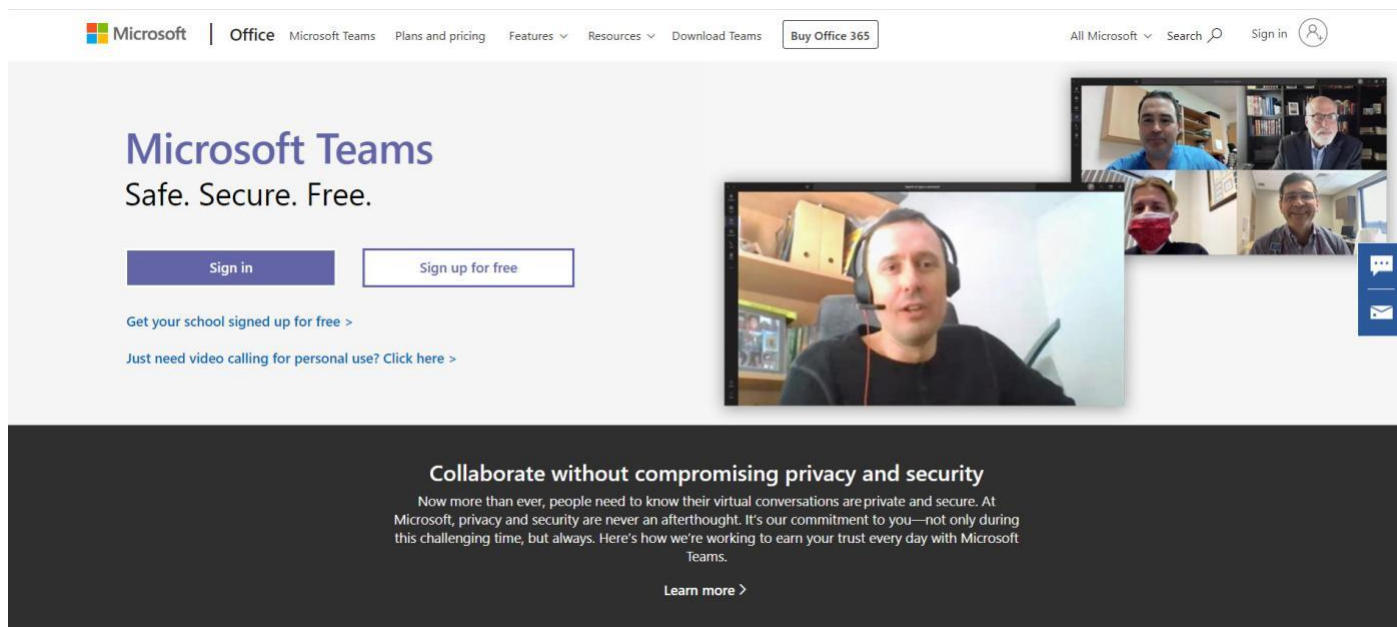
This is part of the Microsoft Office suite of programmes and can be accessed through Microsoft Office 365 or through the Teams app on an iPad or other device. Children will need their school login details to access this. All children in Reception to Year 6 already have a login and password and this can be found in their school planners.

Microsoft Teams will be used for the start of the lesson as a general introduction to the lesson and to go through work that has been submitted. Individual work can also be set, submitted and feedback given through Teams.

Microsoft Teams will also be used by teachers to touch base with their pupils although, of course, how the platforms are used exactly will depend upon the age of the children and this may evolve over time. The Prep School and the Pre-Prep will have regular engagement in it over the course of a working day. Both sections of the school will provide set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.

It would be very useful if you as parents and/or guardians could please download the Microsoft Teams app onto a laptop and/or device and ask your child to log in. Please use your child's school email address and their normal computer club password to access Teams.

<https://teams.microsoft.com/download>

The image is a screenshot of the Microsoft Teams website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Microsoft logo, 'Office', 'Microsoft Teams', 'Plans and pricing', 'Features', 'Resources', 'Download Teams', and a 'Buy Office 365' button. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are links for 'All Microsoft', a search icon, and a 'Sign in' button with a user profile icon. The main content area features the 'Microsoft Teams' logo in a large blue font, followed by the tagline 'Safe. Secure. Free.' Below this, there are two buttons: 'Sign in' and 'Sign up for free'. Under the 'Sign in' button, there is a link 'Get your school signed up for free >'. Under the 'Sign up for free' button, there is a link 'Just need video calling for personal use? Click here >'. To the right of the text, there is a large video call window showing a man wearing a headset. Above this window, there is a smaller grid of four video call windows showing other participants. On the far right, there is a vertical blue sidebar with icons for chat, calendar, and mail. At the bottom of the page, there is a dark grey banner with the text 'Collaborate without compromising privacy and security'. Below this text, there is a paragraph: 'Now more than ever, people need to know their virtual conversations are private and secure. At Microsoft, privacy and security are never an afterthought. It's our commitment to you—not only during this challenging time, but always. Here's how we're working to earn your trust every day with Microsoft Teams.' and a 'Learn more >' link.

Completed work (in the event of school closure) will be marked using a mixture of methods: in addition to teacher feedback, there will be an element of self-assessment and parental assessment. This feedback from teachers will be provided at least weekly but is likely to be more frequently, if not daily, in some cases. This feedback will other take place through marking and written feedback on Teams or also in auditory form on Teams, for each assignment that is set. We hope that all tasks set will be attempted but understand if families prefer to focus on the core subjects due to their own situation.

Timetable

In the case of the need to self-isolate, virtual lessons and assignments that are set will follow the usual school timetable. An email will be sent out to you explaining how to access assignments one school day after you have informed us that your child is isolating following a positive pcr test result. The nature of the work and live lessons will vary depending on the age of the child, with parents having flexibility to create their own timetable for what works best at home.

In the event of school closure, the timetable is re-written for the Online Education programme. This, of course, evolved over the last January lockdown to include not only virtual lessons and assignments, but weekly challenges for the school, 'Hang out' sessions for pupils to chat to each other and 'Mindfulness' sessions as well. We would still be providing these sessions this year and have increased the time of virtual teaching to allow for a greater structure to their school days at home.

Pupils in Reception to Year 2 will have two virtual meeting sessions a day, across the week and be set daily tasks. They will also have virtual lessons in MFL and Music, although for Reception, this will be one of their two virtual meetings for the day. For Years 1 and 2, this would mean they have three virtual meetings on some days, as well as three 'Hang out' sessions across the week.

Pupils in the Prep School will start each day at 9.00am with a register and mindfulness session with their Form teacher, before embarking on daily Maths and English lessons which will now last an hour. The increased time will allow for the usual delivery of a lesson but then some time for children to ask questions as they complete their assignments and opportunities for feedback and marking during this time. There will then be other lessons throughout the day in all subjects, except for Computing, Games/PE and PSHEE, although assignments will also be set for these subjects. Each year group will also have three 'Hang out' sessions across the week.

Any new timetable will be emailed to you at the start of the process and form tutors will talk it through with their classes in a virtual lesson. Different year groups will now have virtual lessons at the same time. While we are sure many of you will welcome the change, we understand the challenges that this presents for other households. Please do get in contact with us if you and your family are struggling as we are always able to work with you to find the right compromises for each pupil and the situation.

Teachers will set a variety of tasks, using curriculum resources or videos, and will be on hand over the course of a working school day to answer questions and provide support through emails or the 'chat' function on Teams. Although there may be some internet research activities when it occurs in the school curriculum, the majority of work set will be in accordance with work and tasks that pupils would normally be completing in school.

Although it is possible to record meetings on Teams, we decided to avoid doing this because of GDPR and safeguarding issues.

Work in Maths and English will be marked during the lesson so children can benefit from that immediate feedback that they would usually be accustomed to and then be able to self-access their own work with teacher input, while asking any questions if they are unsure. Work for other subjects can be uploaded onto Teams with marking and feedback to be provided, as before.

ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Each pupil has seen and is aware of the Internet use which is detailed in their planners. It is extremely important that the contents are adhered to. Any transgression from the guidelines contained in the policy will be dealt with in accordance with our behaviour policy. These policies are available for parents on our website.



Some ideas to create a structure for the day

Ready: A child's working space should be distinct from areas in which they usually relax, if possible. It should be clear of clutter and distractions, and please try to limit any background noise that can interfere with the lessons. The children will need to have access to charging points for devices, as well as strong Wi-Fi. Please encourage the children to drink water whenever possible throughout the day but keep all other refreshments for break times and lunch times. We encourage the children to dress appropriately for school but clearly this does not have to include school uniform! The children will be expected to write and make notes during their lessons so please ensure they have stationery and paper with them.

Structure: The day should be structured. By following the school's online learning timetable as closely as possible, pupils will have times between lesson for breaks, meals and socialising. Please ensure that the children use the Microsoft Teams platform in a sensible manner.

Interaction: Each day should allow time for pupils to socialise with other people, whether at home directly, or remotely on social media or the telephone. As humans are innately social beings, children will suffer if they are not given the opportunity to chat to their friends. As well as their own methods of socialising, there are opportunities on Microsoft Teams for the children to engage with each other throughout the school day.

Turn-off: Devices should be turned off for distinct periods during the day, and in the evening to allow for conversation, reading and family interaction. We recommend that pupils have time away from screens during their lunchtime as well as once their academic studies are complete for the day. Restrictions on screen time are vital for maintaining good mental health.



Learning Support

If you have any questions regarding Learning Support, please contact Mrs Palmer via e-mail: cpalmer@widfordlodge.co.uk. Despite teachers endeavouring to differentiate the online work, we are aware that working remotely for many pupils is challenging. Supporting from a distance is not ideal, but we are keen to do our best to help, so please get in touch if you need to. Individual/small group lessons will continue where possible and the relevant Learning Support staff will be in touch regarding the timetabling of these. Teachers will also continue to set differentiated tasks for children who require it.

Recognition of effort

We want to be able to see the children achieve and make progress in everything that they do. We will be able to monitor their progress through every assignment and challenge that is set and the children's form tutors will be keeping a close eye on the speed and range of their successes. The usual system of Headteacher's awards and stars, will continue, with a weekly recorded assembly for children to watch.

Some questions:

Will every piece of work be done on a computer? *No. Pupils will receive tasks via Teams, but not all will have to be completed on a computer or device. Work may be marked during the lesson in Maths and English and each pupil has an Online Learning book which they can use instead of inputting the information straight onto Teams. If required, an uploaded picture of the work to Teams would work fine.*

Will every lesson be live?

Your virtual timetable will show all your live lessons. Tasks set on Teams ensure that every pupil receives the same learning experience. If a child is unable to join a live lesson for whatever reason, please ensure you communicate this to the teacher concerned. They still may be able to support you with any particular assignment.

How much help can I give my son or daughter? *This depends on the activity that has been set and the age of your child. Be mindful of the fact that, in a normal classroom setting, the children will not usually have constant 1-1 adult supervision to complete tasks. Checking that they're on task every now and then may be wise, though.*



How to support home learning

We know that there is a fair amount of anxiety about the prospect of supporting your children with their learning, especially as you try to juggle work and family commitments. As stated, and as far as possible, we will provide the necessary guidance so that your child can continue to develop and flourish but, inevitably, there will be a need to oversee what the children are doing and provide some hands-on support in certain tasks, depending upon the age of the pupils.

We know that many parents are not teachers and so below are some useful tips to help create a positive learning environment at home.

- Try and **set up a routine**/structure for the day as this will help the children adapt. A routine is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they are dressed before starting the 'school' day. Due to safeguarding reasons, please ensure that children are not in their pyjamas for the start of their lessons. The children do not need to wear school uniform, but they should be presentable.
- The new timetable has been designed to allow children, parents and teachers to have a **short break** between each lesson. Children's concentration is more effective in shorter bursts and this will help in terms of sharing the childcare duties.
- **Display the timetable** on the wall so that everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day.
- **Check in** with your child(ren) and try to keep to the timetable. Do not be afraid to be flexible if a task/activity is going well or if your child wants more time.
- **Designate a working space** if possible and, at the end of the day, have a clear cut-off to signal that school time is over.
- Make time for **exercise** and use the 15 minute break between the lessons. Our PE staff will be sharing some useful ideas, and I am sure that many of you will continue to enjoy sessions with Joe Wicks.
- **Take care of your own health** and wellbeing. If you have a garden, use it regularly; if you do not, try to get out once a day.
- Most importantly, **be realistic** about what you can do. Everybody's circumstances are different. If you cannot stick to the timetable, or if your child misses a lesson, do not worry. Just email your child's teacher so that they are aware.

Other activities to keep children engaged throughout the day

- Individual music lessons will be delivered by Peripatetic staff for those that learn instruments.
- Encourage your children to write postcards to their relatives, friends or pen pals.
- Ask relatives or friends to listen to your children read on FaceTime or ask them to read to younger children.
- Give them chores to do so they feel more responsible about the daily routine at home.
- Ask them to help you cook and bake.
- Ask them to help you in the garden, perhaps plant some seedlings.
- Accept that they will probably watch more TV/spend more time on their devices but try to set limits.



Online Safety

During this process, the children are likely to be online far more than in the past, using computers, laptops, tablets and mobile devices to access learning material as well as other entertainment. The risks will vary depending on their age, but it is important that, as adults, we do everything possible to keep our young people safe and healthy.

There are a few **key principles** that the pupils should be reminded to follow when engaging in their online learning:

- Pupils must follow the terms of the Widford Lodge School's internet use policy, as printed in their Pupil Planner.
- Pupils should work in a suitable open space, free from distractions. They should not work in a bedroom but if this is essential, they should have a neutral background.
- Pupils should be dressed appropriately. Pyjamas cannot be worn.
- Any background should be neutral so as to safeguard all involved.
- The online learning environment should respect the same boundaries as the classroom. No photographs of staff or pupils may be taken during lesson time, and language must be appropriate.
- Lessons must neither be recorded by a pupil, nor shared publicly.
- Pupils must not deliberately download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive.
- Pupils must remember to log out after any online lesson.
- Pupils must ensure that there are no other windows open on their device (e.g. an online game) during an online lesson.
- Communication between pupils, and with staff, must be sensible and responsible at all times.
- Live lessons and chats should only take place during the normal school day.
- A breach of these guidelines may result in a school sanction in line with protocols during normal school times.

There are also specific things that **parents can do to support safe online learning**:

- Parents should show an interest in their children's online learning and be aware of the staff members with whom they are communicating.
- Parents should be aware of the privacy and security settings for the platforms being used. For Microsoft Teams, the guidance is as follows:
 - Turn off guest access so that only school issued email addresses communicate.
 - If linked to Office 365, enable Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) to help prevent against threats via emails, links and attachments.
 - Make sure your operating system has the latest updates and security patches.
 - Beware of phishing emails asking for your password: Microsoft will never ask you for it.
- Parents must ensure that the correct parental controls are in place to ensure children can conduct safe internet searches
- Parents should talk to their children about staying safe online, encouraging them to report any instances of unwanted messages or images from strangers or pupils.

Whilst it is essential that children, and indeed adults, get a break from technology each day, it would be unrealistic to think that, once lesson time is over, the children are going to be totally 'screen free'. It is important to acknowledge that the internet provides vast opportunities for children, both educationally and socially, especially during the current situation. It must therefore be used positively and to the very best advantage.

Discuss and agree as a family how the internet will be used in your house at a level that is appropriate to your children; discuss with your children what they think is and is not acceptable to do online, and then add your own rules and boundaries. Some families find it helpful to write 'ground rules' down as a visual reminder (a template 'family agreement' can be found at www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement).

Remind your children about the need to keep personal information private and not to be tempted to overshare, or to click on links or free offers. Remind them also only to communicate with real life friends. Now is certainly a good time to educate children about good digital citizenship before they make a mistake which could impact upon them, their friends or the school. Encourage them to stop and think before sharing anything online, and to consider how it might be perceived by others. Remind them that once something has been shared, it is almost impossible to delete it. It is important that children understand the importance of being kind and thoughtful in their online interactions; the right sort of communication during difficult times such as these can be hugely beneficial to others.

With older children, it is, of course, important to recognise their need and right to privacy. Those private conversations that would have taken place with friends at break times won't be able to happen over the next few weeks; parents and guardians must respect that children need to be able to have them in some other way. Being too intrusive will not help; it is about trust. As adults, we need to appreciate that these are difficult times for our children too, and technology could enable vital communication with friends, teachers and wider family.

Above all else, try to maintain an open mind and positive attitude when talking with your children about the internet and their use of social media: do not assume that they are up to no good! Ask your children which games, apps, websites they like to use, and try to engage in their online world with them. Playing together with children can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online. The most important thing is to ensure that your children know that they should come to you, or another trusted adult, for help if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable. Reassure your children that help is always available.

Do have a look at the following links for useful tips on talking to children about online safety in an age-appropriate way:

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/have-a-conversation

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>



The following websites are **additional sources of information**:



Think U Know: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Child Protection and Online Protection (CEOP), a command of the UK's National Crime Agency, has a website suitable for children aged 5-16. There is a section written specifically for parents and carers, containing useful advice and information.



NSPCC: www.net-aware.org.uk and www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety

The NSPCC has produced resources for parents, including Net Aware, a tool which reviews some of the most popular apps. The website has helpful advice for parents about issues such as online grooming, 'sexting' and cyberbullying. The NSPCC also provides a helpline for parents: 0808 8005002



ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

The ChildLine website has a wide range of information and advice on both online and offline safety. There is information about online gaming and grooming, which can be shared with children. ChildLine provides a helpline for children: 0800 1111.



UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

The UK Safer Internet Centre provides a wide variety of advice and guidance to help parents discuss online safety with their children. There are useful checklists for privacy settings on social networks and suggestions to consider before buying devices for your children.



Childnet International: www.childnet.com

Childnet International has resources, including videos and storybooks, to help parents discuss online safety with their children. It includes advice on setting up parental controls, cyberbullying and setting up a family agreement for safer internet use.



Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org

Internet Matters contains all of the information that adults need to keep children safe online. It has a tool which guides you through how to set up parental controls on all of the different devices in the home.



BBC 'Own It' Website and App: www.bbc.com/ownit and <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control/own-it-app>

The BBC Own It website aims to help children aged 8-13 'be the boss' of their online lives. The website has a range of videos and activities to explore with children. There is also a helpful app which can be installed on children's devices to help them use technology responsibly.



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