



10th November 2023

URGENT – KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

Does your child have a YouTube account?

Would you know if they had a YouTube account?

How are you tracking your child's use of YouTube?

YouTube is a website/app that even the most reluctant online users have some awareness of. The site allows videos to be recorded and shared and for communication between users – on many t.v's it is almost like another channel – it is *really* accessible.

Did you know?

- Children must be at least 13 years old to hold a YouTube account
- If aged between 13-17 years parents must provide permission to set up a YouTube account
- Children of all ages can use **YouTubeKids**

In recent days we have been supporting a family whose child, without their knowledge had a YouTube account and was posting videos which a child would consider to be appropriate and innocent. While we would like to think that our children have a good understanding of what is appropriate and what isn't, it is easy to get carried away and disregard safety messages when posting videos. Children are also unaware of the attraction that particular videos may have to criminals.

We know that many children in our school have YouTube accounts or channels. The parents that we have been working with would want you to know that it is important that you close these, or manage them very carefully. Even the most aware child, aged 11 or under, cannot take into account all of the dangers or pitfalls that posting apparently harmless videos of themselves can bring.

We would urge you to close any YouTube accounts that are held by children under the age of 13 or take enormous care in allowing your child access to YouTube unsupervised. As a parent of a 12 year old child myself I'm acutely aware of the challenges involved in keeping children safe online. I use the free protection offered by **Google's Family Link** to protect my daughter and allow me to help her when online challenges are faced (<https://families.google>). I also use **Qustodio** (www.qustodio.com) which offers more significant oversight of my daughter's online world including sight of her internet access, text messages, search terms (including YouTube) etc.. Please look online or talk to us about these tools designed to protect children stepping out privately into the online world for the first time.

We regularly write to parents of Year 5 and 6 children about children's use of WhatsApp and the inherent challenges that this presents. This letter has been sent to parents of children from every year group to remind of the challenges that children's unsupervised use of YouTube presents.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Hampton

Acting Head Teacher