

# ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

PROVIDING ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



SPRING 2022

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## Get St Katharine's Talking: Online Safety Parent Workshop

Through the 'Get St Katharine's Talking' initiative, our aim is to provide ongoing support and encouragement to parents/carers and provide you with the necessary tools to keep your children safe online. Our website and regular Online Safety Newsletter provides up-to-date information, guidance and strategies in order to be in regular conversation with your children about their use of the internet.

We are pleased to announce that, following feedback from our parent surveys, we have organised an Online Safety Parent Workshop with Kat Howard from Smoothwall and esafe, (in partnership with National Online Safety) on **Wednesday 2nd February 2022 from 5:00pm – 6:00pm**. This will take place on Zoom – link to be sent out nearer the time. During this workshop, Kat will provide you with lots of practical hints, tips and activities to support your child in the online environment.

In order to tailor this session to you as parents, we would be grateful if you could spend just 2 minutes completing this short survey to tell us if there are any particular areas which you would like to be covered during this session or if you have any questions you would like answered.

**Follow This Link To Take Our Survey:**  
<https://student.desmos.com/join/cma3wm>

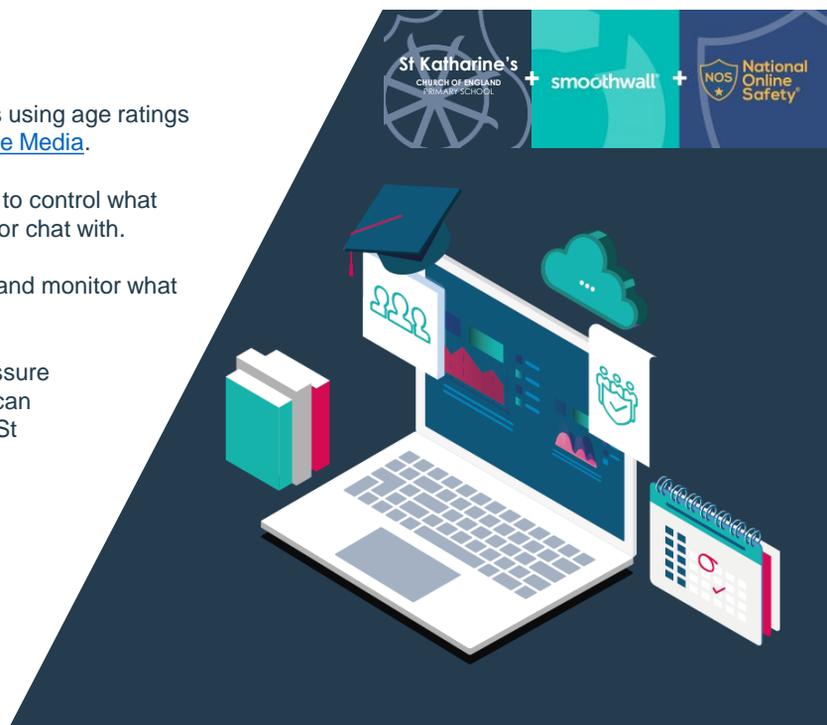


Please complete the survey by Friday 21st January 2022; this will then give us enough time to pass your thoughts on to Kat ready for our workshop session.

We are really excited about this workshop and hope you are able to join us.

## Follow our top tips...

1. Ensure your children are using appropriate sites using age ratings provided or review sites such as [Common Sense Media](#).
2. Younger children need supervising when online to control what they are accessing and who they can message or chat with.
3. For older young people, have clear boundaries and monitor what they are doing.
4. Have open conversations with children and reassure them that if they see inappropriate content you can help them – see the Online Safety page on the St Katharine's website for further guidance.
5. Report inappropriate content to the platform it is on.
6. Don't pass on scare stories without checking thoroughly – if necessary check with the [NSPCC/O2 helpline](#).



# SOMETHING TO GET YOU THINKING...

## The Emerging Challenge of Technology: The Visual Impact of Lockdown

During the summer holiday (oh, how long ago that now seems!), I spent a day being a tourist in London and was taken around by two twenty-somethings who were home from university.

What struck me most about my time there wasn't the fact that the fourth column installation in Trafalgar Square was right up there in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - a giant ice cream with a drone stuck on the side, lovely though this was - but the fact that my tour guides were in constant engagement with their phones; not for typical 'touristy' use of photographing soldiers with shiny hats on horses, big pointy buildings or the meal they have just had placed in front of them, but to remain in constant contact with anyone and everyone who wasn't there with them.

It later transpired that their daily screen time is somewhere in the region of 13 hours per day - hence why they carried round the additional phone battery wherever we went.



'THE END' - HEATHER PHILLIPSON'S FOURTH PLINTH ART INSTALLATION

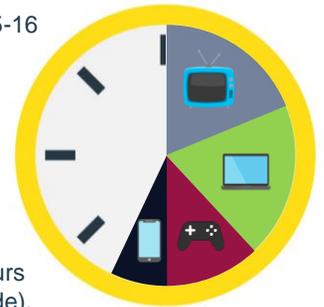
Taking just a brief moment to stop and look around in any setting, I am staggered to see just how much technology is on constant show - people walking along, sat down in groups and even at the table in restaurants.

So, the question I'm asking is:

### How much screen time is too much?

In the UK, children aged between 5-16 years spend an average of:

- 2-3 hours per day watching television;
- 2-3 hours on the internet;
- 1-2 hours playing video games;
- and over an hour on mobile phones (not talk)



This totals to an average of 6.3 hours of screen time per day (CensusWide).

A recent survey carried out by CensusWide of 2,000 families with children below the age of 14 found that children were spending an average of 23 hours a week looking at screens on smartphones or similar devices.

According to UNICEF's lead researcher on child internet use, online safety and child rights, digital media has become the primary means through which young people play, communicate, receive, create, share information and express themselves.

United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers have highlighted that parents and carers, children and young people, educational professionals, health professionals, academics and politicians have all expressed concern that **the amount of time children and young people spend engaged in screen-based activities may be detrimental to their physical and mental health.**

With the majority of schools turning to online learning during Lockdown, children spent longer amounts of time in front of a screen in addition to their normal usage.

Optometrists across the country say that they are **diagnosing higher numbers of children with short-sightedness** (myopia) since the start of the pandemic. They have put this down to a number of factors including less time spent outside due to Covid restrictions, more time spent on screens, and a drop-off in numbers of eye tests carried out during the pandemic.

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The College of Optometrists is calling for parents to **get kids playing outside for two hours a day**; this is proven to prevent or stop the development of myopia; and to take their children for eye tests.

Out of 2,000 people surveyed, half used screens more since Covid struck and over a third of those (38%) believed their eyesight had worsened.

Fight for Sight, an eye health charity, is recommending people learn **the 20-20-20 rule** to protect their eyesight. This advises you to look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes you look at a screen.

## What is the Government doing to address excessive screen time?

In April 2020, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport highlighted guidance from the UK's chief medical officers for parents and carers of young people about screen-based activities.

The guidance stated that there was not enough evidence to support guidelines on optimal levels of screen time.

However, they said that research into child development has produced evidence to support some advice for parents and children. This advice included:

- Leaving phones outside of bedrooms at bedtime;
- Encouraging screen-free mealtimes;
- Taking regular breaks from screens; and
- Talking with children about what they are looking at online.



## What are your thoughts about screen time?

Let us know by heading to our online poll and **join the conversation**

<https://student.desmos.com/join/h9h83c>

# ONLINE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are so many great websites and apps offering support and guidance on all things relating to Online Safety. Here are just a few to get you started...



The FREE National Online Safety app provides parents and carers with up-to-date information about how to keep your child(ren) safe online.

Available for Apple and Android.



LEGO have designed a series of activities to support you talk to your child about digital safety and wellbeing as part of their 'build and talk' campaign.

<https://www.lego.com/en-gb/sustainability/children/buildandtalk>