# Online Safety for Schools
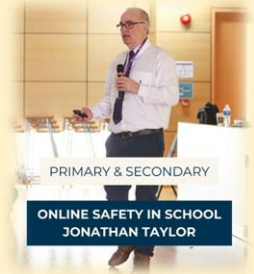
PRIMARY & SECONDARY
ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOL
JONATHAN TAYLOR

# Best Advice to Keep Children Safe When Using Popular Platforms 2026

## Fortnite (Epic Games)

1. **Lock down voice and chat**
   Turn off open voice chat or limit it to "Friends Only" to reduce contact with strangers.
2. **Be cautious of in-game friendships**
   Remind children that players may not be who they claim to be, even if they seem friendly.
3. **Watch spending and scams**
   Enable purchase controls to prevent accidental spending and avoid fake "free V-Bucks" offers.

## Roblox

1. **Use parental controls and age settings**
   Restrict chat, content access, and who can contact your child.
2. **Teach children not to move conversations off-platform**
   Groomers often try to shift chats to Snapchat or Discord.
3. **Look out for inappropriate games or roleplay**
   Some user-created content may bypass moderation — check what they play regularly.

## Minecraft (especially multiplayer servers)

1. **Only allow trusted servers**
   Public servers can expose children to strangers and inappropriate chat.
2. **Disable chat or use safe settings for younger players**
   Especially important for under-13s.
3. **Beware of mods and downloads**
   Only download from reputable sources to avoid malware or harmful content.
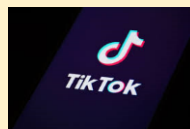
# Instagram



1. **Set accounts to private**
   This prevents strangers viewing posts or messaging freely.
2. **Discuss photo-sharing and digital footprint**
   Images can be copied, shared, or misused permanently.
3. **Watch for grooming via DMs**
   Predators often start with compliments and slowly build trust.
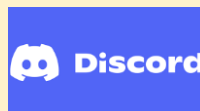
# Snapchat



1. **Disable Snap Map location sharing**
   Location should be set to "Ghost Mode."
2. **Explain that snaps are not truly disappearing**
   Screenshots and screen-recording are easy.
3. **Be alert to streak pressure and risky sharing**
   Streak culture can push children into constant contact or unsafe behaviour.

# TikTok



1. **Manage the algorithm**
   Teach children to block/report harmful content and reset their feed if needed.
2. **Private account + restricted messaging**
   Reduce unwanted contact from adults or strangers.
3. **Talk about dangerous trends and challenges**
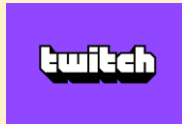   Encourage critical thinking before copying viral behaviour.

# Discord



1. **Limit server access**
   Public servers can expose children to adult content and strangers.
2. **Turn off direct messages from non-friends**
   Key safeguarding setting.
3. **Watch for grooming and extremist spaces**
   Discord is often used for private group manipulation.

## Twitch



1. **Monitor livestream chats**
   Live chat can include sexual language, bullying, or inappropriate jokes.
2. **Don't allow private messaging with strangers**
   Disable whispers or restrict contacts.
3. **Explain donation and scam risks**
   Children can be targeted with fake giveaways or pressured into spending.

## Steam



1. **Use Family View and spending limits**
   Prevent unwanted purchases or access to adult-rated games.
2. **Be cautious with friend requests**
   Strangers may add children for scams or grooming.
3. **Watch community discussions**
   Forums can expose young people to harmful language or content.

## WhatsApp



1. **Check group chat safety**
   Children can be added to large groups without permission.
2. **Turn on privacy settings**
   Hide profile photo, last seen, and status from unknown contacts.
3. **Discuss image-sharing and bullying**
   WhatsApp is often where school bullying spreads quickly.

## Metaverse (General)



1. **Treat it like the real world, not a game**
   Children can experience harassment, grooming, or sexualised behaviour.
2. **Use boundaries and personal space tools**
   Most platforms offer "safe zone" or blocking features.
3. **Supervision is essential for younger users**
   These environments are not designed for unsupervised children.

# VR Chat



1. **Strongly discourage use for under-13s**
   Adult content and unmoderated spaces are common.
2. **Teach children to leave immediately if uncomfortable**
   VR immersion makes harassment more intense.
3. **Disable voice chat with strangers**
   Voice contact increases grooming risk.



# Horizon Worlds (Meta)

1. **Use Meta parental supervision tools**
   Ensure age-appropriate restrictions are enabled.
2. **Explain avatar-based harassment risks**
   Children may face bullying or sexual behaviour.
3. **Encourage "block, report, leave"**
   Quick exit is the safest response.



# Call of Duty

1. **Turn off proximity and lobby voice chat**
   COD voice chat is often toxic and abusive.
2. **Check age ratings and content maturity**
   Not suitable for younger children.
3. **Discuss peer pressure and aggressive behaviour**
   Competitive play can increase anger, stress, or bullying.



# Grand Theft Auto (GTA Online)

1. **Not appropriate for children**
   GTA contains adult violence, sexual content, and criminal themes.
2. **Online mode exposes players to adults**
   Voice chat and roleplay servers are high-risk.
3. **Parents should set firm boundaries**
   Strong recommendation: avoid under-18 use.

## Key Closing Message for Parents (Simple Rule)

Across every platform, the safest approach is:

- **Privacy settings on**
- **Chat and strangers limited**
- **Children know how to block/report/tell an adult**

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## Online Safety 4 Schools

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