Dear Parents and Carers,

🎄 E-Safety Christmas Newsletter (Autumn term second half 2025)

Christmas is a time for fun, family, and festive cheer—and for many children, it also means more time online. Whether they're gaming, chatting with friends, or exploring new apps, the digital world can be exciting and full of opportunities.

For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the internet can be a wonderful way to learn and connect—but it also brings some extra challenges. Over the holidays, we often see:

New devices and apps arriving as gifts.

Extra screen time during school breaks.

More gaming and social media use, which can sometimes lead to risks like contact with strangers, inappropriate content, or scams.

This newsletter is here to help you keep things safe and positive online, so your child can enjoy a joyful and secure digital Christmas.

Why Children with SEND May Be More Vulnerable Online
Children with SEND can face additional challenges online, such as:

Difficulty interpreting social cues – making them more susceptible to grooming or manipulation.

Communication barriers – which can make reporting harmful experiences harder.

Routine dependence – sudden changes in apps or platforms can cause distress.

Social vulnerability – craving acceptance may lead to risky interactions.

Common risks include cyberbullying, scams, online grooming, exposure to harmful content, and financial exploitation through in-app purchases.

Festive Top Tips for Parents

- **Use Parental Controls**
  Enable filters on devices and apps. Check privacy settings regularly. Review devices often.
- **Talk About Online Risks**
  Discuss what's safe to share and what's not.
  Explain why they should never share personal details or accept friend requests.
- **Monitor Gaming and social media**
  Check age ratings for games and apps.
  Encourage privacy settings on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat.

- **Stay Involved**
  Play games together and talk about what your child enjoys online.
- **Teach Simple Safety Rules**
  Never share personal details.
  Report anything that feels wrong.
  Save messages if unsure.

Spotlight on Roblox

Roblox remains one of the most popular platforms for children. It encourages creativity but also poses risks, as you may already be aware, this has been publicised on the news recently.

Unfiltered Content – Some user-generated games may include inappropriate themes.
Roblox Scams – Fake offers and pressure to spend money are common.
Chat Features – Strangers can contact children unless settings are adjusted.
Safety Tips for Roblox:

-Turn on **Account Restrictions** for younger players.
-Enable **Two-Step Verification**.
-Check **Friends List** and game history regularly.
-Use Roblox's **Parental Controls Dashboard** to manage content and spending.

Other Current E-Safety Issues

TikTok & Snapchat – Risks include harmful trends, privacy breaches, and location sharing.
Discord – Unmoderated chats can expose children to explicit content or grooming.
Deepfake Scams & AI Risks – Teach children to question what they see online.
Cyberbullying – Continues to evolve with anonymous accounts and new tactics.

Signs of Online Harm

Sudden secrecy about online activity.
Mood changes after using devices.
Receiving gifts or messages from unknown people.

As always, if you notice these, act quickly: talk to your child and report concerns to school via your child's class teacher (always cc'ing the admin office into any emails you send), or preferably directly to me as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) m.deveney@clarity.essex.sch.uk.

Thank you for supporting your child's digital journey. Together, we can help them build a safe, confident, and positive online presence.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

Yours sincerely

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STAY SAFE ON
NEW DEVICES

Whether you're an internet newbie or a pro at surfing the web, it's always important to keep online safety in mind. We've pulled together a list of top tips to make it easier for you to protect yourself and your devices in the digital world – helping you steer clear of hazards like misleading information and vicious viruses. There's never a bad time to refresh your internet safety knowledge, but it's an especially smart thing to do before you start using any shiny new devices!

SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS

Be suspicious of new information

TELL A TRUSTED ADULT IF SOMETHING UPSETS YOU

DON'T CHAT WITH STRANGERS

BE HONEST WITH PARENTS & CARERS

TAKE BREAKS FROM BEING ONLINE

ASK PERMISSION *before downloading anything*

AVOID SHARING PRIVATE PHOTOS

Don't give away personal information

Stick to trusted apps

TAKE NOTICE OF AGE RESTRICTIONS

DOUBLE CHECK YOUR NEWS SOURCES

National Online Safety®
NOS
#WakeUpWednesday