



Inspiring All to Excellence



Edge Hill Academy

Remote Learning Policy

Document Control

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Version Control

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Section	Changes Made

Rationale

In the event of children self-isolating, a partial school closure due to COVID-19 or a lockdown resulting in school only being open to vulnerable children or those of keyworkers, the school is committed to providing a continuity of education to its learners. This will be provided through remote (online) learning. Extensive remote learning would apply particularly in a situation in which the school is closed for an extended period of time, but a high proportion of students and teachers are healthy, and able to work as normal from home.

Remote learning may also be appropriate in situations when students, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from school, or longer term illness, assuming students are able to complete school work at home.

Who is this policy applicable to?

In line with government guidance, pupils, staff and families should self-isolate if they display any of the following symptoms;

- A continuous, dry cough
- A high temperature above 37.8°C
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste
- Have had access to a test and this has returned a positive result for Covid-19

Flexibility of Learning

We realise that the circumstances that cause our school to close or of a pupil having to self-isolate will affect families in a number of ways. In our planning and expectations, we are aware of the need for flexibility from all sides:-

- parents may be trying to work from home so access to technology as a family may be limited;
- Parents may have two or more children trying to access technology and need to prioritise the needs of young people studying towards GCSE/A Level accreditation;
- teachers may be trying to manage their home situation and the learning of their own children;
- systems may not always function as they should.

An understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, these difficulties on all sides is essential for success. All learning that is pre-recorded will be available to view at any time. This will also support the learners at home who can re watch lessons/modelling to support their on-going learning.

Often, it is necessary to operate more flexibly, for example to accommodate contexts where pupils are having to share a single device within the home, meaning that access to recorded lessons is also needed. However, frequent contact between pupils and teachers is crucial. This contact may, for example, be through presence

in a remotely delivered lesson, questioning, feedback, or some other form of on or offline exchange about schoolwork. (DFE 2020)

Expectation for Families

We believe that it is in the best interests of our children that we continue to provide structured support to the best of our ability. It must be noted that the work children engage in during a period of closure will be part of our current planning and so should not be considered as optional. Children and parents should consider the arrangements as set out in this document as highly recommended. Where families have made school aware they have no devices for online learning, alternative arrangements have been made. (Appendix 5)

For self-isolating pupils

Parents will:-

- Report any self-isolation absence to the school office by 8am each day and let the school know if the child is well enough for Remote Learning.
- If the child is not yet well enough for Remote Learning, ensure the school is notified once they have recovered and are ready for Remote Learning.
- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Contact the school if there are any concerns or support is needed.
- Ensure that children have access to the learning provided by the school.

Teaching Staff will :-

- Provide learning opportunities for those not in school that have the same objective as those who are in school from the second day of the notification that they are well enough for Remote Learning.
- Provide learning that can be completed both online and offline in line with parental request.
- Provide feedback where possible (Appendix for learning that is returned on Teams).
- Respond to queries as soon as possible, when they are not in class.

N.B The staff member providing the learning and giving the feedback may not always be the class teacher for those self-isolating.

Children will:-

On the first day of informing school they are well enough for Remote Learning, carry out reading, spelling (year group spellings from Home School Link Book), daily exercise (Joe Wicks etc), TT Rockstars.

- Follow a suggested timetable for their learning at home from the second day after informing school they are well enough for Remote Learning:

9 -9.30: Daily Reading.

9.30-10.30: English.

10.30-10.50: Break.

10.50-11.25: Curriculum Based Learning.

11.25-12.35: Maths.

12.35-1.40: Lunch

1.40-3pm-Curriculum Based Learning.

- Ensure that learning they are completing is to the best of their ability.
- Only access materials that have been shared by teaching staff or by parental permission.
- To only use Teams to contact members of their class or teachers in an appropriate manner.

For partial school closures

Parents will:-

- Will follow the instructions given by school and ensure they do not send their child/children into a school setting during the closure.
- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Contact the school if there are any concerns or support is needed.
- Ensure that children have access to the learning provided by the school.

Teaching Staff will :-

- Provide learning closely linked to the school's medium term plans to ensure no lost learning.
- Provide pre-recorded video introductions for Mathematics, English and other subjects when appropriate. These might be from White Rose, from websites or their own recorded videos. (See Appendix 1).
- Provide a suitable task for children to complete during their PPA time.
- Provide learning that can be completed both online and offline.
- Provide feedback for learning that is returned on Teams. (Appendix 5)
- Respond to queries within the hours of 9am – 2pm each day (except break and lunchtime). Providing live commentary for learning during this time through posts or individual support on comments within their piece of work as necessary and appropriate.
- Contact children either through Teams (on-line chat) or where necessary through a telephone conversation. Contact should be made at least twice a week.

N.B The staff member providing the learning and giving the feedback may not always be the class teacher.

Children will:-

- On the first day of isolation, carry out reading, spelling (year group spellings from Home School Link Book), daily exercise (Joe Wicks etc), TT Rockstars.
- Follow a suggested time table for their learning at home from the second day of isolation:

9 -9.30: Daily Reading.

9.30-10.30: English.

10.30-10.50: Break.

10.50-11.25: Curriculum Based Learning.

11.25-12.35: Maths.

12.35-1.40: Lunch

1.40-3pm-Curriculum Based Learning.

- Ensure that learning they are completing is to the best of their ability.

- Only access materials that have been shared by teaching staff or by parental permission.
- To only use Teams to contact members of their class or teachers in an appropriate manner.

For Lockdowns resulting in only vulnerable and keyworker children in school: Parents will:

- Will follow the instructions given by school and ensure they do not send their child/children into a school setting during the closure unless they have rung school and been allocated a place.
- Ensure that keyworker children are only attending school on days when there is no adult at home to care for them.
- Support their child's learning to the best of their ability.
- Contact the school if there are any concerns or support is needed.
- Ensure that children have access to the learning provided by the school.

Teaching Staff will :-

- Follow the rota system to ensure the planning, remote learning and in school learning are shared between the members of year group staff.
- Provide learning closely linked to the school's medium-term plans to ensure no lost learning.
- Where appropriate, a brief introductory video will be uploaded by a member of staff in the morning to welcome the children, talk through the day and provide further support for their well-being and learning.
- Provide pre-recorded video introductions for Mathematics, English and other curriculum subjects as appropriate. These might be from White Rose, from websites or their own recorded videos. (See Appendix 1).
- Provide a suitable task for children to complete during their PPA time.
- Provide learning that can be completed both online and offline (a paper pack).
- Provide feedback for learning that is returned on Teams. (Appendix 4)
- Respond to queries within the hours of 9am – 3.30pm each day (except break, lunchtime and PPA).
- Ensure the Safeguarding Contact form on Teams is filled in daily.
- Ensure contact with every child at least twice a week (via Teams, a pack collection, an email or a phone conversation where necessary).

N.B The staff member providing the learning and giving feedback may not always be the class teacher.

Children will:-

- Follow a suggested timetable for their learning at home from the second day of isolation such as:

9 -9.30: Daily Reading.
9.30-10.30: English.
10.30-10.50: Break.
10.50-11.25: Mindfulness activities/Other.
11.25-12.35: Maths.
12.35-1.40: Lunch
1.40-3.30pm-Curriculum Based Learning.

- Ensure that learning they are completing is to the best of their ability.
- Only access materials that have been shared by teaching staff or by parental permission.
- To only use Teams to contact members of their class or teachers in an app

Expectation for staff within school during school closures

Teaching Assistants

- Teaching assistants must be available during their usual working hours each day to support with the teaching, marking and feedback for the class they are timetabled to work with.
- If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.
- During the school day, teaching assistants must complete tasks as directed by the teacher they are timetabled to work with or a member of the SLT.

Forest School Staff

- Provide suitable activities for the class they are timetabled to be working with in the event that this class is isolating.
- If Forest School Staff are self-isolating, they should provide suitable activities for the class they are timetabled to be working with for the class teacher to carry out with them in school.
- If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example due to sickness, they should report this using the normal absence procedure.
- During a Lockdown, Forest School Staff must be available during their usual working hours each day to support with the teaching, marking and feedback for the class they are timetabled to work with.

Intervention Group Teacher

- Support the class teacher in providing suitable work for the subjects they attend the intervention class for.
- During a Lockdown, the Intervention Group Teacher must be available during their usual working hours each day to support with the teaching, marking and feedback for the class they are timetabled to work with.

Designated safeguarding lead

- The DSL is responsible for managing and dealing with all safeguarding concerns raised by staff/parents or outside agencies.

SENCO

- Liaising with parents of children who have an EHC plan to discuss needs and adjustments required for remote learning.
- Ensuring that pupils with EHC plans continue to have their needs met while learning remotely, and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make any alternate arrangements for pupils with EHC plans.

Remote learning systems access information

Year Three

- Year Three learners will access learning using the Class Teams page.
- Parents will support the learners in uploading their learning.
- Learners will have access to TT Rockstars <https://play.ttrockstars.com/auth/school/student>
- Learners will have access to Purple Mash <https://www.purplemash.com/login/>
- Parents should continue to read with their children;
- Practical activities such as baking, painting and craftwork should also be undertaken.

Year Four

- Year Four learners will access learning using the Class Teams page.
- Parents will support the learners in uploading their learning.
- Learners will have access to TT Rockstars <https://play.ttrockstars.com/auth/school/student>
- Learners will have access to Purple Mash <https://www.purplemash.com/login/>
- Parents should continue to read with their children;
- Practical activities such as baking, painting and craftwork should also be undertaken.

Year Five

- Year Five learners will access learning using the Class Teams page.
- Parents will support the learners in uploading their learning.
- Learners will have access to TT Rockstars <https://play.ttrockstars.com/auth/school/student>
- Learners will have access to Purple Mash <https://www.purplemash.com/login/>
- Parents should continue to read with their children;
- Practical activities such as baking, painting and craftwork should also be undertaken.

Year Six

- Year Six learners will access learning using the Class Teams page.
- Parents will support the learners in uploading their learning.
- Learners will have access to TT Rockstars <https://play.ttrockstars.com/auth/school/student>

- Learners will have access to Purple Mash <https://www.purplemash.com/login/>
- Parents should continue to read with their children;
- Practical activities such as baking, painting and craftwork should also be undertaken.

Online resources recommended by School

- BBC daily lessons <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>
- Oak National Academy <https://classroom.thenational.academy/>
- Phonics Play <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- Youtube Kids <https://www.youtubekids.com/>
- Think You Know (Online Safety) - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- White Rose Home learning <https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>

Appendix 1 – Creating Videos

When creating a video for online/remote learning.

These guidelines must be followed to safeguard yourself and the learners. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in disciplinary action. 8

When videoing at home ensure that;

- Backgrounds are blank, with no family photographs or distinguishing features.
- If recording yourself, ensure professional clothes are worn.
- Ensure you watch videos back to check for any mistakes.
- When recording you should be the only person in the room.

Videos should be no longer than 3 minutes.

Videos should be, unless organised by SLT, of the class teacher of that class team or, in the event of a lockdown, a teacher from their year group.

Videos may be checked by SLT or other members of the leadership team at any time.

For more information about how you can safeguard yourselves and the children when remote learning;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Appendix 2 – Assignments

It is important to note that high quality remote teaching is far more than setting work for pupils to complete, although setting tasks to complement sequences of teaching plays an important role.

Evidence shows that lengthy or open-ended projects or research activities are in most cases less likely to lead to strong progress or outcomes. 1 Such approaches should generally be avoided in favour of the more interactive, teacher-led approaches to delivering the school's planned curriculum described above. (DFE 2020)

- Assignments should be set daily for the following:
- Reading
- English
- Maths
- Another curriculum subject.

It is recommended that assignments are pre-prepared and saved in drafts to then schedule or assign.

Years 3, 4 and 5 will assign all assignments for the day prior to 8.50am each morning. This will allow parents to view the assignments and decide the best times to complete each assignment as these children will require more guidance and support from adults at home.

Year 6 will assign the assignments at set times during the day following the school timetable. This will allow for Year 6 children to have more structure to their day as many are working independently. It will also help them prepare for secondary school and the independence that is encouraged there.

A mindfulness task can be set daily too if you feel it would be helpful. This could be exercise, art, music or anything else you feel is suitable to give the children a brain break.

Appendix 3 – Safeguarding Contact Form

The Safeguarding Contact Form (Teams, Teaching Staff, Files) must be completed daily by teaching staff and teaching assistants.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to get in touch with any children not accessing Teams via a phone call.

There must be contact (via Teams, a phone call, an email, school attendance, picking up/dropping off a paper pack). Twice a week. If you have tried several times and are unable to get in touch with a child or parent, please pass this information to Jane Foster as she monitors this contact form daily.

SLT will also monitor the Safeguarding Contact Form.

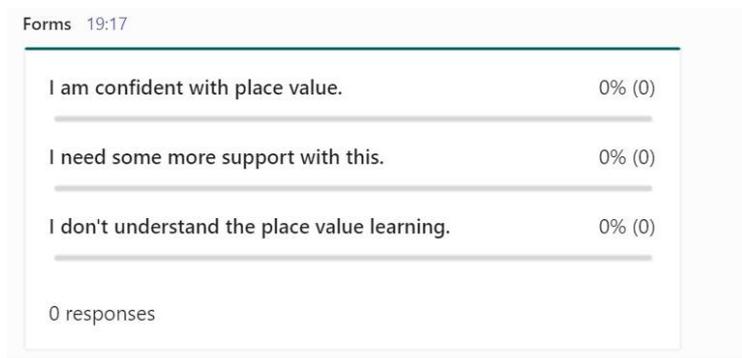
When making phone calls from home ensure that you are alone with no family members in the room. All phone calls made must be from private numbers. You can change this in your settings on your mobile device or by dialling 141 before the number.

Appendix 4 – Feedback and Marking

Feedback should be immediate during the school day via the Posts on Teams. Polls are encouraged to assess learners. Other assessment tools could be Kahoot, quizzes etc.

DFE have outlined some key points in the Remote Learning Good Practice document that can be found; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remoteeducation-good-practice>

Polls



Where learning is set as an assignment the learning should be marked as it would be in school whilst making it manageable, with feedback provided to support the on-going learning in the Feedback box.

The comments speech bubbles should also be used to give specific feedback either during or after a lesson when necessary. This enables the child to have live contact and be supported whilst completing the task and gives them chance to move their learning on by reacting to the comments made during the following lesson.

Feedback will be given for Maths and English as appropriate (Feedback box, comments speech bubbles, a phone call, an email, posts on chat etc.).

Feedback will be given on other curriculum subjects before the next lesson of that subject (usually weekly).

Appendix 5

Families with no devices for online learning.

All families have been asked at Parents' Evening about connectivity to the internet and devices at home. From this staff will be made aware of those learners in their year group.

Self-Isolating Learners.

Learning will be created on the first day of self-isolation for these learners and put into a pack which will be posted first class to the learners' address. The pack must include the common exception words for the allocated year group, an English unit and the current learning from White Rose. The expectation would be that these are marked at home by the parents. Staff could review this learning on return but no formal marking would take place.

School closure and Lockdown Learners

If a bubble closure or a Lockdown occurs, learning can be collected by a parent or adult no more than once a week during the closure period when the previous pack would be returned in order to track engagement. The expectation would be that these are marked at home by the parents.

During a Lockdown, Louise Lloyd will take responsibility for sending a weekly feedback email to these learners and will copy the class teacher into this. Packs will then be returned to the class teacher via their pigeonhole in school. Class Teachers could review this learning on return but no formal marking will take place. These learners should be contacted by telephone at least twice a week to check in on their learning and well-being unless they are partially accessing Teams. If no telephone contact is successful after several attempts, the DSL must be informed. On return assessment of these learners will take place to ensure teachers are aware of gaps. Some one to one teaching may have to occur to ensure there is no lost learning.

10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR PARENTS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For parents and carers, the idea of remote learning isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote learning experience.

1) Take an active interest in your child's learning

As a parent or carer, remote learning will be a new concept for your child and there are bound to be a few teething problems to start with. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.



2) Monitor your child's communication and online activity

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.



3) Establish a daily schedule and routine

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.



4) Encourage screen breaks away from devices

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teachers will invariably advise on screen breaks however it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.



5) Ensure your learning device is in a public space in the home

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.



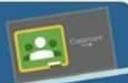
6) Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software

Dependant on how your school implements remote learning, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.



7) Ensure your child only uses official school communication channels

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.



8) Familiarise yourself with relevant school policies

Schools should have a policy on remote learning and direction that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.



9) Maintain feedback with teachers

Engage in communication with teachers where possible and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.



10) Monitor your child's wellbeing and mental health

Remote learning will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as you can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends everyday might take its toll.



Smart devices promise to make our lives easier. And in many cases - they do. But these new technologies present risks too. Whether you're using a digital assistant to record your shopping list or you're controlling your lights through a smart system, many smart functions can be 'hacked' and controlled by someone outside your home. This guide will help you identify some of the ways you can stay alert and protect yourself.

1 KNOW THE RISKS

The success of any smart device relies on it communicating with other devices using the Internet. It's an unavoidable part of using smart devices, but it does expose you to numerous risks. Attackers could use the Internet connection to steal your data for identify fraud or to make unauthorised purchases through your devices. There is even potential for more sinister exploitation, such as child grooming or cyber-bullying.

2 WHAT IS THE INTERNET OF THINGS?

This is the term given to all the devices connected to the Internet in your home. It includes a new digital doorbell connected to your smartphone, your kettle that boils when you tell it to on your tablet or your heating that comes on when you swipe on your smart watch. The Internet of Things (IoT) is designed to make life easier, but it also opens up your home network to potential cyber-attacks. It doesn't mean you can't enjoy the benefits, but it does mean being aware of the potential negatives.

3 CHECK ENCRYPTION SETTINGS

Whenever data is sent over the Internet, it is 'encrypted'. This makes it harder to read if it's intercepted. You should look to use a strong encryption setting, such as WPA2, rather than WPA or WEP. Again, you can check your router manual for how to do this.

4 SECURE YOUR DEVICES

If you do use apps on your smartphone to control devices in your home, make sure your smartphone is secure. At the very least makes sure the pin function is enabled, as well as any biometric authentication you have. Where possible, it's also a good idea to download some anti-virus software for your smartphone.

5 KEEP YOUR SOFTWARE UP TO DATE

Manufacturers constantly update and improve software used in smart devices. Some will automatically alert you to an update, but not all do. To be on the safe side, it's a good idea to set reminders in your calendar. Check the manufacturer's website for any updates and run them if necessary.

6 RENAME THE 'GATEWAY' TO YOUR HOME

Your internet router is the virtual gateway to your home network. It needs protecting. To do this, you should change the default name (the SSID) and password. You can usually find steps to do this in the instruction manual. Don't use your family name. Choose something more obscure. Make the password complicated too, using upper and lower-case letters, numbers and symbols. Do this for your router and any other smart devices connected to the Internet.

14 Top Tips To Get Smart About The DEVICES In Your Home



7 USE A SEPARATE NETWORK FOR GUESTS

If your router has a feature that allows you to set up a separate network for guests, you should use it. That way, when guests use your Wi-Fi they won't have access to your devices.

10 TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If you ever feel something is wrong or your network is being exploited, visit the manufacturer's website or ring their technical support department. It's better to be safe than sorry.

11 UPDATE SOFTWARE

Manufacturers constantly update and improve software used in smart devices. Some will automatically alert you to an update, but not all do. To be on the safe side, it's a good idea to set reminders in your calendar. Check the manufacturer's website for any updates and run them if necessary.

8 SAY GOODBYE TO SIRI AND ALEXA

It's a good idea to change the activation words on your smart devices so they are unique to you and your family. This makes it that much harder for people to break into your smart devices.

9 DEACTIVATE ANY UNNECESSARY FEATURES

Though it's a fun idea, you probably don't need to control your kettle from outside the house. In fact there are often many unnecessary features included on smart devices. Where possible, you should look to disable these. Doing so reduces the ability for people to hack your devices. And, when someone sees you've actively taken steps to increase security, they're less inclined to try to compromise them.

12 BUILD A WALL

You could also purchase a dedicated 'firewall' device. This is something that plugs into your network and stops cyber threats reaching your router. Some routers do have a firewall element included, but they are no replacement for the real thing. A firewall device thoroughly analyses information coming into and out of your network and helps stop malicious attacks. A security device is strongly recommended to anyone who works from home or deals with sensitive information.

13 SECURE YOUR SMARTPHONE

If you do use apps on your smartphone to control devices in your home, make sure your smartphone is secure. At the very least makes sure the pin function is enabled, as well as any biometric authentication you have. Where possible, it's also a good idea to download some anti-virus software for your smartphone too.

Meet our expert

Emma Davis was a secondary school Computer Science teacher for more than decade. Since leaving education, she has been working in a cyber security firm delivering cyber awareness training to businesses and carrying out network testing. She is a mother of a five-year-old, she's had vast experience of controlling and managing how children access online services and use apps.

14 REGULARLY AUDIT YOUR DEVICES AND CONSOLES

Every now and then you should check through all of your smart devices (including games consoles connected to the Internet). Turn them off at the mains and disconnect them from the Internet. In fact, it's good practice to disconnect any devices that aren't in use. It's a small thing but really does help. Even when you think a device might be in sleep mode, if it's connected to the Internet it could still be listening or streaming data.

SOURCES: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>, <https://www.getsafeonline.org>

What parents need to know about

MICROSOFT TEAMS

DISCLOSING PERSONAL DETAILS

Like any messaging service or social network, children can be targeted by others to share their private or personal information ranging from their phone number, birthday and home address to their social media accounts or even their personal login details and passwords. Oversharing this private information can lead to any manner of risks including online fraud, bullying or even grooming activity.



CYBERBULLYING

The risk of cyberbullying can be increased online when using chat facilities. Microsoft Teams provides the ability for users to chat to each other via its instant messaging service, both as part of a group or privately. Children could find themselves the target of negative or hurtful comments directed from other users who might find it easier to say things they maybe otherwise wouldn't in person.

BULLY



INAPPROPRIATE CHAT

The chance to have private conversations in Teams can also mean that children feel as though they can share messages and communication between each other that are hidden away from others. Whilst children are most likely to use Teams in a school setting, the ability to chat privately may provide an opportunity to be less formal which could lead to sharing inappropriate messages, files or content which is unsuitable in a school environment.



HACKING RISK

Teams, like any software application, may be a target for hackers to illicit personal data. A 'man-in-the-middle attack' could occur, whereby the attacker reroutes communication between two users through the attacker's computer without the knowledge of the other users. This means that online communications could possibly be intercepted and be read or listened to, exposing both parties to the possibility of identity fraud or other criminal behaviour.



VIRUS INFECTION

Viruses and other harmful programs are among the risks of using online platforms like Microsoft Teams. Wherever you can share files or links, there is a risk that the content could be malicious. This could lead to slow computer performance, deletion of data, the theft of private or personal information and even hackers taking control of your PC.



LIVE STREAMING RISKS

Microsoft Teams, like other video-conferencing software platforms, facilitates live streaming. That means it inevitably carries some of the associated risks. These are likely to be minimal within a controlled environment (for instance in a classroom setting / remote learning). However, live streaming means that content isn't always moderated and children may inadvertently view or hear inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material that they otherwise wouldn't.



Safety Tips for Parents & Carers

BLOCK USERS

If your child is receiving inappropriate messages or finds themselves being harassed or abused on Teams, they can block these contacts from the privacy control in the settings menu. To add an extra layer of protection, you can also block contacts whom hide their ID to protect children from communicating with people they don't know.



PROTECT PERSONAL INFO

It's a good idea to talk to your child about the importance of keeping their personal information private and secure. Children should only give out the minimum information they need to when creating an account and understand that if other people request their personal details from them, they should avoid providing it and report any concerns to a trusted adult.



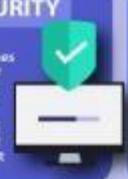
ENABLE BACKGROUND BLUR

To help protect your privacy during a video call or live stream, it may be a good idea to blur the background or even add a background effect. This can easily be done by clicking 'Background effects' before joining a meeting after which you'll have the option to blur your background, replace your background with one of the images provided or upload and use an image of your own.



UPDATE COMPUTER SECURITY

It's important to ensure you perform regular computer and software updates, as these patches often improve security flaws and minimise your vulnerability to cyberattacks. Having your own computer security or anti-malware software is another level of defence in minimising the chances of an attack from viruses, malware and other harmful programs. Ensure this is updated everyday so that it is able to protect you against the very latest threats.



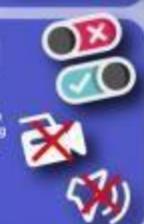
TALK ABOUT RISKS

As a parent, talking to your child and making them aware of the risks of working and communicating online can help them to be more digitally resilient. Perhaps outline a set of agreed do's and don'ts and try to ensure young people know what to do if they are made to feel uncomfortable or experience any negative behaviour or activity.



AVOID VIDEO/AUDIO

It's always a good idea to turn off your audio during live group calls when not in use. This can easily be done by muting the mic and will avoid others hearing anything personal in the background at home or at school. Similarly, if possible, try to encourage children to avoid using video call to help guard against any privacy concerns and limit the risks of viewing anything inappropriate or unsettling.





Suggested Apps and Games For 7-11 YEARS



Learning



MAGIC PIANO BY SMILE

While Magic Piano doesn't strictly teach you how to play the piano, it does teach hand-eye coordination and can help spark creativity in young minds. Users can play along to a variety of popular songs on a range of difficulty levels in an attempt to get through the song with as few mistakes as possible, increasing dexterity and reaction times. Free on iOS & Android, the game does contain some ads and in-app purchases, so be sure to check these out before letting younger players unleash their musical side. Magic Piano is PEGI 3 rated but requires slightly more nimble hands to master so older kids will get the most from this.



AZOOMEE

Azoomee houses over 1,000 games, videos and activities for kids of all ages to play, have fun and most importantly, develop their key skills in. The app is award winning, BAFTA nominated, supported by the NSPCC (according to the description on their app page) and comes with a suite of parental controls built in. As well as educational games, activities and kid's favourite TV shows, the app also has a built-in chat feature where they can talk to their friends safely. A nice little touch is that if you buy a subscription to Azoomee for unlimited premium content for £4.99 a month, a portion of the money raised goes towards supporting the NSPCC. The app is available on iOS, Android and Amazon.



POLY BRIDGE

While Poly Bridge could be easily enjoyed solely as a game, it's actually an incredibly clever way to learn critical thinking and engineering skills in a kid friendly way. It's set in a colourful, cartoony world and has extremely simple gameplay. In Poly Bridge, it's your task to get cars, buses, trucks, boats and more safely to their destination by designing bridges that are safe and practical. How those bridges are created is entirely up to you. With over 100 levels, a sandbox mode and almost infinite playability, Poly Bridge is available on PC, Android, iOS and Nintendo Switch at various price points, so be sure to check which is the best option for you.



CROSSWORD PUZZLES (WUBU APPS LTD)

Crossword puzzles might not immediately seem like a learning game for younger kids, but they're incredibly effective at building strong word skills and problem solving. This one by Wubu Apps Limited is exclusive to iOS and constantly changes its roster of daily crosswords and challenges, although there are a whole bunch of apps available out there which do similar things. The app is rated 4+ but would likely be suited to kids a little older as the crosswords are designed for adults as well. As mentioned, Crossword Puzzles is only available on iOS devices and is free to download but does contain in-app purchases.



SCRIBBLENAUTS UNLIMITED

Scribblenauts is a game like few others in that it actively encourages children to use their intuition to solve a variety of puzzles. Armed only with their imagination, players must complete levels by conjuring potentially useful items for main character Maxwell to collect the Starites and achieve his goal. The game helps create strong vocabulary and word association to a fun 2D backdrop. While any version of Scribblenauts is good, Unlimited is the most readily available, being released on Wii U, PC, Nintendo 3DS, iOS and Android devices, PS4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch.



SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY

Widely regarded as one of the greatest games Nintendo have ever made, Super Mario Odyssey provides family friendly fun and a challenging environment for kids to learn new skills in a video game. Rated PEGI 7, Odyssey can be enjoyed by almost any age range, even those who are young at heart. The caveat is that the game is only available on Nintendo Switch, so some investment will need to be made, but the console boasts a host of other child-safe titles and the ability to play on the go as well as at home.



NETFLIX

As obvious as it may sound, Netflix's children's section is ideal for keeping young ones and toddlers out of trouble on long journeys or at home. The specific profile for kids allows them to only view content appropriate for younger audiences which lets you and them watch their favourite shows and movies anywhere, at any time. Curated playlists, easy navigation through TV series and movies, and no-hassle auto-play means a stress-free guarantee. The only downside to the app is that it requires a Netflix subscription in order to use it but if you're happy to pay the monthly cost, it's an absolute must for any parent.



MINECRAFT

Minecraft is one of those rare, timeless classics that can be enjoyed by every age group. Coming in both a console version and a pocket edition for mobile devices, the sandbox world-building fun in Minecraft can be an amazing place to let your imagination run wild. The game can be played online with friends and supports cross-play, meaning that no matter what device everybody has, it can be played together. While the game isn't free, it will undoubtedly provide hours and hours of fun for the whole family so it's worth the investment of a one-time purchase. As one of the most popular games ever released, it inspires critical thinking, problem solving and above all, fun.



LEGO MOVIE MAKER 2

The LEGO Movie Maker 2 app lets users create their own stop-motion movies and upload them for others to watch online. Kids can create a short LEGO movie in whatever genre they like using a range of easy to use tools and are able to add in sounds and visual effects to make the videos look super realistic. All movies are moderated before they make it online so you can be sure no sensitive information is uploaded or viewed by third parties. The app is free to download on both iOS and Android devices but does require creation of a LEGO account to upload videos. The only information needed for an account is the country you live in, your email address and date of birth. While it's rated for 4+, kids of 8 and up will get the most out of this one.



ADVENTURES OF POCO ECO: LOST SOUNDS

If something more slow-paced and chilled out is on your radar, Adventures of POCO ECO should be able to scratch that itch. With an emphasis on creating a rich and inviting musical soundscape over hardcore gameplay, the puzzle action is perfect for unwinding young minds, as opposed to challenging them. The single-player game is available on all iOS and Android devices, as well as the Amazon Kindle Store and you can also nab yourself a free copy of the soundtrack with the purchase.



Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



