

HALF TERMLY UPDATE

Welcome to our latest update! Lionheart Educational Trust is now sending out an e-safety update every half term, prior to the school holidays, in order to support parents and students. Due to the nature of widespread internet use at the moment, you will find this is a bumper edition this half-term, containing advice and support from a wider range of sources.

This update will feature resources by the National Online Safety organisation;

A FREE ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE ON DISNEY+

In 2019, media titan Disney launched its own streaming platform, intending to challenge the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime. Giving (often exclusive) access to shows and movies – such as the legendary studio’s animated classics and the revered Star Wars back catalogue – Disney+ has been a colossal success, proving popular with viewers of all ages.

Despite Disney’s reputation for wholesome, child-friendly content, however, there’s far more material available on their platform – some of which is aimed exclusively at adults. This could easily fly under the radar, given the company’s general image. This guide has useful tips to help your family sit back, relax and enjoy what Disney+ has to offer.

A FREE ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE FOR SETTING UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

At this time of year, it’s highly possible that you have a new phone, games console or other digital device stashed somewhere at home, ready to be unwrapped. Many parents also prefer to place some protective measures on those gifts – to keep their child shielded from potential #OnlineSafety risks – while others would like to, but aren’t sure where to begin.

This guide shepherds you through the process of establishing parental controls on new internet-enabled devices, from smartphones to laptops to consoles. Simply find the device in question and read on to find out what options you have and how to enable them – letting children enjoy their shiny new gadget, without so much of the worry over where it might lead them.

A FREE ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE ON MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions figure in the business model of many game and app developers, allowing them to bring in ongoing revenue as users continue to pay for extra features and content; even software that’s initially free to download can be monetised in this way. It’s a system which has featured in many of younger gamers’ perennial favourite franchises, from Fortnite to FIFA.

As well as encouraging regular spending, however, microtransactions – especially the increasingly common use of loot boxes – have also been scrutinised for what many argue is a resemblance to gambling, with the potential to foster addictive behaviours. This guide tells parents and carers what they need to know about microtransactions.

A FREE ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE ON EA SPORTS FC

For 20 years, FIFA dominated the football video gaming arena, attracting legions of devoted fans and scooping up accolades like a digital Real Madrid. After parting ways with the sport’s governing body, however, renowned developers Electronic Arts (EA) have now launched their own individual bid for the title. It’s called EA Sports FC 24, and it’s effectively FIFA 2.0.

Familiar action delivered by the same team, of course, points to a comparable level of popularity – especially among those young gamers raised on the FIFA franchise. This guide highlights, however, EA Sports FC 24 also carries many similar risks to its predecessor, including addictive gameplay, abusive voice chats and expensive in-game purchases.

A FREE ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE ON HOW TO HAVE A TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

With Christmas right around the corner, millions of families are excitedly anticipating the chance to spend some quality time with each other over the festive season. When everyone’s engrossed in their phones or glued to their games consoles, however, genuinely meaningful moments with loved ones can often be difficult to orchestrate.

This Christmas guide will lend a hand: providing some advice on helping young people to set aside their devices for a while and live in the moment. Even if going full tech cold turkey feels unrealistic, implementing just a few of these tips could still decrease the amount of screen time in your home this festive season – enabling everyone to make the most of it.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISNEY+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The Walt Disney Company's streaming service, Disney+ combines entertainment from the famous animation studio itself with Pixar, Star and National Geographic, plus the Marvel and Star Wars franchises. With access to the latest releases, Disney classics and original series, there's plenty of content to explore. While parents may have noted that adverts have now been introduced on some versions of the service, the platform is – unsurprisingly for a Disney product – designed to be appropriate for the whole family.

LESS SUITABLE CONTENT

While Disney+ is predominantly family friendly, there are some movies and shows in its library which are aimed at an older audience: these may scare younger ones or contain themes or language that you'd rather your child wasn't exposed to. You could avoid such situations by enabling Junior Mode (see 'Adjust content settings', below) or specifying a content age rating for your child's profile.

BINGE WATCHING

With the option to view content on any internet-enabled device and a growing catalogue of movies, cartoons and documentaries, Disney+ can make managing screen time difficult. This could result in children binge watching content, distracting them from activities like homework or socialising. Too much screen time has also been shown to negatively impact mood, sleep patterns and weight.

PHISHING EMAILS

Be especially cautious if you receive emails or text messages purporting to be from Disney+. There have been numerous reports of online scammers impersonating Disney+ staff in an attempt to gain access to subscribers' personal information. Disney+ states it will never email or call customers asking for their payment details, their private information or their password.

ENCROACHING ADVERTS

Disney+ has introduced a new subscription package – Disney+ Standard with Ads – which plays commercials before movies and during shows (like many TV channels). There are no adverts in Junior Mode, but profiles with a content rating of 6+ years will see ads appropriate for that age category. Adults who give consent will see personalised adverts based on their location and viewing history.

ACCESSING ADULTS' PROFILES

If adults don't set a PIN for their profile, children could access it and encounter content which isn't age appropriate. In the settings, Junior Mode has a toggle titled 'Kid-Proof Exit' which requires the user to read four words (numbers, spelled out) and enter them to switch profiles. For older children who can read, though, this isn't secure enough – so using a PIN for adult profiles is recommended.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ADJUST CONTENT SETTINGS

When setting up an account, there's an option to create profiles in what's called Junior Mode. This generally covers material that's suitable for children up to age 6 and is therefore fairly limited. You can give older children a wider choice of viewing by building a standard profile, then going into the settings and choosing a content rating from one of the pre-set alternatives: 6+, 9+, 12+ or 14+.

TURN OFF AUTO-PLAY

When a cartoon, show or movie finishes, Disney+ uses algorithms to identify content with similar themes, which it thinks your child will also enjoy. This suggestion will then automatically begin to play by default. There's an option to turn off this auto-play function in the profile settings, which will encourage your child to take a break from the screen and move on to a different activity.

ADD PIN PROTECTION

Disney+ enables you to effectively lock profiles behind a four-digit PIN. In particular, some of the shows on the platform's Star content hub are far more oriented to adults (including several hard-hitting dramas from US networks), so protecting parents' or older siblings' profiles with a PIN will help to prevent younger children stumbling across material which isn't intended for them.

ENJOY AS A FAMILY

When your child watches a movie or show on Disney+ for the first time, you may want to sit with them to ensure it's suitable. You could do the same when introducing them to older films that you haven't seen for years: your perception of what's appropriate has very probably changed, and some of the language and attitudes in movies from your own childhood may seem quite shocking today.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Source: https://help.disneyplus.com/csp?id=csp_article_content&sys_kb_id=1f68cd33be64980f3eac63391270 | https://help.disneyplus.com/csp?id=csp_article_content&sys_kb_id=153eb11bd441d03011eb2e439b193b | https://help.disneyplus.com/csp?id=csp_article_content&sys_kb_id=9582efcb0a0ac50055ce0d53991917 | <https://help.disneyplus.com/en-GB/article/disneyplus-en-us-scom-prevention#--text=Ber%20d%20of%20sites%20that%20as%20password%20or%20billing%20details>

Top Tips for SETTING UP PARENTAL CONTROLS ON NEW DEVICES

In children's eagerness to start enjoying new digital gadgets immediately, it can be easy to overlook setting up the type of parental controls that can help to protect them online. If you don't sort those out from the very start, it can be an uphill battle – technologically and psychologically – to impose such controls later. Here's our rundown of what to look for when setting up the various internet-enabled devices that might be lurking under the tree at this time of year.

IPHONE

If your child's lucky enough to be getting their own iPhone, parental controls can help avoid issues like screen addiction and unsuitable content. Go into the settings and scroll down to 'Screen Time'. From here you can customise important settings including time limits on using the device, communication restrictions and content blockers. You can also lock your changes behind a passcode.

ANDROID

With Android devices, Google's Family Link app is your friend. You'll need a Google account – and a separate one for your child, which you should use when first setting up the device. Then, in Family Link on your own device, select 'Add Child' and enter their account details. This lets you specify limits on daily usage, restrict certain apps, block particular content and more.

PLAYSTATION

You can prep for a PlayStation before it's even unwrapped. At my.account.sony.com, create an account, then go to Account Management > Family Management > Add Family Member to set up your child's account, which you'll use to sign in on the console. You can restrict the age ratings of the games they can play and who they can talk to. On the PS5, you can make exceptions for any games you think are acceptable despite their high age rating.

IPAD

iPad parental controls are identical to those on iPhones. However, if you've got a shared family iPad and want to ensure your children aren't seeing anything age-inappropriate after you hand them the device, there's a feature called Guided Access (under Settings > Accessibility > Guided Access). With this switched on, young ones can only use the app that's currently open.

XBOX

The Xbox Family Settings app helps you manage which games your child can play (and when). You'll need to set up the console with your own account and then add a child profile. Make sure your account's password protected, so your child can't alter your choices later. You'll be walked through the functions at setup, but you can also reach them manually via Settings > Account > Family Settings.

NINTENDO SWITCH

Download the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app on your phone, and you'll be shown how to link it to the console. Once that's done, you can limit how long your child can play each day, decide what age ratings are permitted and more. You'll also get weekly updates on how often they've used the device. These controls are accessible through the console itself, but the app is usually easier.

WINDOWS 11 PCs

On Windows 11, account management is key. Set up the device with your own account as the admin. Then go to Settings > Accounts > Family and Other Users and create your child's account (if you've already done this on a previous PC, just log in with those details). Microsoft Family Safety (either the app or the site) then lets you control screen time, what content children can view and more.

CHROMEBOOKS

Chromebooks' parental controls are managed via the Family Link app. Unlike an Android device, however, you need set up the Chromebook with your own account first, then add your child's. Go to Settings > People > Add Person and input your child's Google account details (or create a new account). Your child can then log in, and you can monitor what they're up to via Family Link.

MACS

Like iPhones, parental controls for Macs are managed via the Screen Time settings. Again, the crux here is to set yourself up as the administrator before adding any child accounts. In the settings, look for Users & Groups to create your child's account, then – while on their profile – use the screen time options to place any boundaries around apps, usage and who your child can communicate with (and vice versa).

SMART TVS

Smart TVs typically have their own individual parental controls. One of the most popular brands is Samsung – and on their TVs, you can control the content available to your child. In the Settings menu, under 'Broadcasting', you can lock channels and restrict content by its age rating. Even this isn't foolproof, however: some apps (like YouTube) might still let children access unsuitable material.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins is a technology journalist and editor with more than 20 years' experience of working for titles such as the Sunday Times, Which?, PC Pro and Computeractive. He's appeared regularly as a tech pundit on television and radio, including on BBC Newsnight, Radio 5 Live and the ITV News at Ten. He has two children and writes regularly on the subject of internet safety.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions (often abbreviated as "MTX") are digital purchases made within an app or game to unlock extra features or additional content such as new levels. A popular sub-set of these are loot boxes, which contain a selection (usually random) of virtual items: from character skins to game-changing equipment like better weapons. Microtransactions (and loot boxes in particular) are now widespread in apps and games, but concerns persist that they normalise gambling and can foster addictive behaviours – especially among younger players.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GATEWAY TO GAMBLING?

Microtransactions have been criticised for promoting gambling-adjacent behaviour in children. Research has also suggested that exposure to the loot box system could affect the likelihood of a young person suffering gambling harms later in life: children who purchased or used loot boxes in the last 12 months were found to be more likely to have gambled during the same period, as well.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Microtransactions (and loot boxes especially) could lead to young people displaying compulsive behaviours. Loot boxes are designed to be addictive, and the sought-after prizes they contain are dispensed at random. This means that young gamers might not get what they want straight away, causing them to spend more money as well as additional time gaming.

PAYING TO WIN

In many popular games (the FIFA series being a notable example), microtransactions make it far easier to succeed – which is a concern because children can often find it difficult to keep track of their spending. Once a child starts making in-game purchases, they may continue buying to keep up with their friends and other players – sometimes without recognising the mounting real-world cost.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

DATA COLLECTION

To allow a young person to complete microtransactions, many app and game developers collect personal data such as their name, address, email, geolocation information, photos, payment details and so on. Even if this data remains secure (which is by no means guaranteed), there's always the chance that it will be used – and possibly sold on to third parties – for marketing purposes.

AFFECTING DAILY ROUTINE

Online games tend to revolve around repeated loops of activity that can affect purchasing decisions and potentially influence children's spending patterns. This could lead to your child not only handing over more money but also adjusting their daily routine to match the game's schedule – potentially impacting more important elements of their day, such as homework and family time.

SATELLITE SPENDING

If you've linked a payment method like a debit card or a PayPal account to your child's game or app, it's wise to keep a close eye on their microtransactions to ensure they aren't racking up a large bill. Letting a child have access to your card (if they're still too young to have their own) or other means of payment could also lead to them spending beyond the apps and games they normally use.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's important to have a serviceable idea of whether the games your child plays use the loot box system (even if it goes by a different name) or include the option of buying items, equipment and so forth. If so, it's crucial to help your child understand that this costs actual money, and that they shouldn't feel pressured into making any purchases.

CHAT ABOUT 'CHANCE'

It may help to explain to your child that many microtransactions involve an element of chance: they could pay money and still not get what they want in return. Emphasise that – while not usually costing much individually – these in-app and in-game purchases can soon add up. Talk to your child about how spending their money in a game or app means they have less to use in the real world.

(GIFT) CARDS ON THE TABLE

Investing in an in-game currency gift card can be a useful way of helping your child get to grips with budgeting. If you buy, say, a £10 V-bucks Fortnite gift card, monitor how long it takes them to spend it. When they come to you asking for more, you could make it the starting point for a conversation about how quickly that money went and how they could earn their next gift card.

STOP SPENDING AT SOURCE

You might decide that the wisest strategy is to remove the potential for spending money on microtransactions. If so, most games, apps and devices have options in their settings to help you manage what your child can spend – or to disable that function altogether, preventing them from buying additional items for their games or boosted functionality for certain apps.

WATCH FOR THE SIGNS

If you're worried that your child's passion for a particular game or app may tempt them into habitual spending on microtransactions, it's important to remember the indicators of addictive behaviour. Irritability, a lack of concentration and prioritising recreational screen time ahead of homework or mealtimes could all be signs that you need to have a conversation about a more balanced routine.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about EA SPORTS FC 24

After two decades of holding the official FIFA licence, EA Sports' phenomenally successful football video game series has embarked on a solo run at goal. This season's iteration marks the debut appearance of a new name and branding, but don't let those fool you – EA Sports FC 24 is still a very similar proposition to last year's FIFA 23. Popular features such as Ultimate Team remain a big focus, meaning that potentially costly in-game spending is still among the line-up of risks that parents and carers should be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?



RECURRING RELEASES

EA Sports FC 24 effectively picks up the FIFA template – meaning that after a year, we can expect EA Sports FC 25 to hit the shelves. Updates between versions of the FIFA franchise tended to be minor, but young fans of the game are almost certain to want the new edition in around 12 months' time, so they can keep playing with updated team kits, players and squad lists.

OFFENSIVE VOICE CHAT

FIFA 23 introduced cross-platform play, and EA Sports FC 24 goes a step further with Clubs, Seasons and Ultimate Team cooperative modes across PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and S, and PC. That's exciting news for youngsters who love to play with friends online – but connecting a much wider audience does potentially open lines of communication between children and far older online gamers.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

In FIFA, Ultimate Team proved to be a profitable innovation for developers Electronic Arts (EA), and is now found in many of their other titles. Players spend in-game currency to recruit better footballers for their team, but this process can take a frustratingly long time – so young fans may be tempted to skip the grind by paying real-world cash to unlock that coveted star midfielder.

ULTIMATE TEAM SCAMMERS

Since the mode was introduced, Ultimate Team has been a target of scammers who attempt to coax players into buying or selling outside the terms of service from EA and console manufacturers. This shady practice can lead to accounts being banned and in-game items being lost. In some cases, young gamers have also been hoodwinked into handing over their payment details to the fraudsters.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

Just like real-life football, EA Sports FC 24 offers a thrilling, dynamic blend of tactical awareness and skill that fans find absolutely engrossing. Among younger players in particular, this could lead to identifiers of a gaming disorder as they plead for "just one more game" before bedtime or spend practically all weekend playing more matches to earn additional Ultimate Team packs.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONTROL SPENDING

If your child enjoys Ultimate Team mode, check that your payment details aren't linked to their account. Bundles of FC Points (the game's currency) start at just £1, so multiple payments can easily slip under the radar. You could consider setting your child an in-game allowance, perhaps through a prepaid card, which will help them to realise that online spending has a real-world effect.

DEFEND AGAINST SCAMMERS

EA does contact players via email (although not to ask for usernames or passwords, so watch out for that scam tactic), but never through the game itself – so be wary of incoming messages and consider blocking and reporting suspected spam. Your child should avoid buying coins (the in-game currency) from external sites; it could end with them losing their money and being banned from the game.

AVOID EXTRA TIME

Many parents of young football-oriented gamers worry about their child playing too much EA Sports FC. There's now also a companion mobile app, which can also often provide another indicator that a child is struggling to disengage from the game. You could initiate discussions around set hours of play – or take stronger action by utilising the parental controls on their console or phone.

SHOW TOXIC CHAT THE RED CARD

Playing EA Sports FC 24 with friends is highly enjoyable, but if competitive types start to turn toxic online, it can ruin everyone's fun. You could occasionally listen in on the voice chat of your child's game for any warning signs that things may be about to boil over. This goes double when playing online with strangers; voice contact with unknown players can be turned off in the game's settings.

CELEBRATE THE VARIETY

Ultimate Team may be the game's 'star player', but there's plenty more to do in EA Sports FC 24 – including modes which allow access to all of football's big names without needing to spend money on packs to unlock them. This new version of the game includes even more women's teams, marking another step forward in representation: an important subject to discuss and celebrate with children.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. Always eager to test out the latest apps, games and online trends, he's also a parent who understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



Source: <https://www.windowcentral.com/younger-spends-over-8000-fifa-xbox-highlighting-predatory-game-design-call> | <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/addictive-behaviours-gaming-disorder> | <https://www.eurogamer.net/18-european-countries-call-for-better-regulation-of-loot-boxes-following-new-report>

12 Top Tips for Children and Young People to Enjoy a TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

The Christmas holidays are tailor made for families to enjoy relaxed quality time in each other's company – but with distractions like pinging phone notifications, the lure of games consoles and online Boxing Day sales, that can be more difficult than it sounds. Staying off our phones, laptops and tablets, however, can really help us to appreciate the things that genuinely matter at this special time of year. Follow our 12 top tips for a tech-free festive season ... Yule be glad you did! Merry Christmas!

CHRISTMAS CRAFTING

Get out the paper, glue and scissors and have a go at hand-making cards or gift tags. You could also create your own decorations to add a uniquely personal touch to the Christmas tree.

NATURE QUEST

Try a scavenger hunt in the garden or your local park. Challenge yourself and your family to find natural treasures that are symbolic of this time of year – like holly or pinecones, say.

CAROL KARAOKE

Sing your hearts out with a Christmas carol karaoke night. Pick out your favourite tunes and enjoy a musical celebration with family and friends.

WANDER DOWN MEMORY LANE

How about making a scrapbook filled with your favourite memories from Christmases gone by? Unleash your creativity while you enjoy reliving those magical holiday moments.

TRY REFLECTIVE JOURNALLING

Jot down your thoughts, feelings and reflections on the holiday in a notebook or diary – you could also list some of your main goals for the new year.

WRAP IT UP

Take time to get inventive with some luxurious gift wrapping. Break out the wrapping paper, ribbons and bows to make parcelling up those presents into a creative adventure.

WALK IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Delight in the great outdoors with some gentle walks over the holiday. The family can all wrap up warm as you add to your step count and savour the crisp winter air together.

BE A SEASONAL CHEF

Get the whole family working together in the kitchen for some Christmas cooking. Choose a recipe and whip up a festive feast that all of you can enjoy.

ENJOY A CHRISTMAS STORY

Christmas is a perfect time for sparkling stories. Get cosy and lose yourself in a brilliant book, from Dickens to Dr Seuss or a more modern favourite by Chris van Allsburg or Tom Fletcher.

SNOWY SCULPTURES

If we're fortunate enough to get a white Christmas this year, make the most of the opportunity by having a family snowman-building competition!

GAMES NIGHT GALA

Dive into some old-school fun with a tech-free games night. Classic board games and card games have stood the test of time for a reason!

GOODWILL TO ALL

You and your family could spend a day volunteering – perhaps at a food bank or helping a local charity. After all, kindness and thinking of others are part of what Christmas is all about.

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. They also provide training and support to education organisations and local authorities – empowering school leaders and staff with the knowledge and tools to shape their settings into inclusive communities where the mental health of pupils and personnel is prioritised.



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