

What
parents &
carers need
to know
about...

The Online Safety Act 2023

As parents & carers, it may sometimes feel as though there is little you can do to challenge or change what your children experience online. However, did you know that in October 2023 the UK Government passed 'The Online Safety Act' into law? Read on to find out how this goes some way towards keeping our children safe online and giving you the ability to complain to or report major online platforms for inappropriate content.

Harmful Content

Under this new legislation, social media sites must **rapidly remove** illegal or harmful content. This includes:

- bullying or harassing comments
- pornography
- content that supports extremist activity
- content that encourages or depicts violence
- content that encourages or depicts self harm or suicide
- content that encourages or depicts eating disorders

If social media sites fail to take down this content, they can be fined up to 10% of their global revenue and senior executives could go to prison.

[Click here to read the legislation...](#)

Reporting & filtering

Sites have been told that they should have easy procedures for children or their parents/carers to follow to report problems quickly. Sites and platforms should also provide ways for users to filter out any unwanted content.

Hosting misleading adverts

Scams or fraudulent adverts **must be blocked or removed**. If this doesn't happen then the company/site hosting the advert could be fined.

Transparency over risks

All websites and platforms must now take steps to be clearer and more transparent about the risks/hazards that any children using them could encounter. For example, they have been ordered to publish risk assessments for their platforms.

Age-restricted material

It is the responsibility of all sites and platforms to prevent children from accessing age inappropriate material. They must enforce age limits and implement age verification.

A reminder of some popular sites/platforms and their minimum age for users:

Whatsapp - 16
TikTok - 13
Snapchat - 13
Fortnite - 13
Instagram - 13

Non-consensual sharing

Under the Online Safety Act 2023, it is now easier to convict online abusers or people who share intimate images without consent. This new law even relates to people who even threaten to share images without consent. The legislation has also clarified the law on deepfakes (the use of artificial intelligence to make fake photos or videos). [What are deepfakes and how can you spot them?](#)

Remember! If you have any concerns over your child's online activity, you can always seek advice and support from your school's DSLs.