

Keeping our children safe online

Ask yourself these questions

- ? Would you allow your child to walk up to an unknown adult and ask them to play a game with them?
- ? Would you allow your child to walk into a room of between 100 and 1000 people, some of which were known offenders and allow them to talk to these people and become 'friends' ?

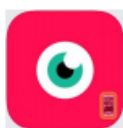
When we allow our children to use the World Wide Web we are allowing them to enter a place where these interactions can take place. As parents and carers we have a responsibility to safeguard our children and teach them skills to stay safe if they find themselves in a vulnerable position.

The message we need to give to our children is to **STAY SAFE.**
DON'T TALK TO ANYONE YOU DON'T KNOW ONLINE.

The following apps interact with unknown people:



Musical.ly



Live.ly

Musical.ly is a 13+ free social media music app where users can watch user generated lip sync video and create video themselves lip-syncing or dancing to music available on the app. It has over 80 millions users. Users can also live stream to their Musical.ly friend followers via Musical.ly's add on app **Live.ly**

Potential concerns

- 18+ content in some songs lyrics. Swearing and adult concepts in some of the provided music.
- Possibility of pornography, graphic content, suicide notes.
- Musical.ly users can search for other users to view or follow near their own location/city.
- User generated videos can be viewed and shared onto other social media and messaging apps increasing exposure.
- Possibility of bullying in comments.
- Users can publicise their messenger usernames or social media profiles on their Musical.ly profile.
- **Live.ly live streaming is not private even if you have the privacy settings set up.**
- Using live streaming Musical.ly app Live.ly may mean larger exposure interacting in real time with viewers.
- Adults can interact with children. When using Live.ly, children could be messaged and asked to live stream themselves.
- Children could be encouraged to carry out inappropriate acts.
- Possibility of fake user accounts which can be used to hijack views or set up to bully or coerce into inappropriate situations
- Possibility of hacking of accounts by promotional accounts (Free Musical.ly Crowns) within the apps.
- Not easy to report accounts for being fakes or underage inside the app.
- Many underage accounts with large amounts of followers.
- Easy for users to create multiple accounts and hide them from their parents.



Omegle

Omegle's strapline is "Chat to strangers". This is an 18+ free online chat (and video chat) website that openly promotes talking to strangers. It will pair you up with a random stranger and it can also search your interests on Facebook to pair you with a like-minded individual.

Potential concerns

- This is live streamed and the content is not restricted.
- The site is intended for adult users and chats are anonymous. There is little to no moderation and the one-on-one chat is very high risk.
- Users have reported witnessing other users carry out inappropriate acts live or asking children to say or do inappropriate things.



Snapchat

This is a picture-messaging app whose claim to fame is that the messages last only for a few seconds once they're opened, then supposedly evaporate into thin air. In theory, you can send embarrassing or risqué pictures without being afraid someone will steal or distribute them.

Potential concerns

- Snapchat makes it easy to send risqué pictures .
- Anyone to grab a screenshot of the image before it's deleted.
- Children themselves have been in serious legal trouble for capturing and distributing illegal photos sent to them by underage children.



Roblox

Multiplayer game which encourages making 'friends' with strangers.

Potential concerns

- Children think they are developing friendships but they have no idea who the person they are playing with is.
- No restrictions so risk of explicit language being used.



Movie Star Planet

MovieStarPlanet is a social online universe where each player is a movie star. MovieStarPlanet aims to provide children aged between 8 and 15 years with a social networking platform. MovieStarPlanet is free to play, however, players can pay to gain access to extended features and fast-track their rise to fame .

Potential concerns

- This is an app aimed at children so will therefore be a target for adults who want to interact with children.
- Names such as *LoverGirl* and *DistrictLover* are promoted.
- There are public chats which consist of both boys and girls asking members to type '123' if they love them and asking if they would go out with them. Others state that they are hot'.
- Most are dressed in rock star type outfits but the boys can go bare breasted and the girls can wear bikinis.
- If you asked someone how old they were, a warning comes up stating you are violated the terms, however members are getting around this by using txt speak.
- Members can be invited into each other's rooms for parties and chat.

Children can find themselves in situations where they are tricked into sharing images and feel trapped or bullied into keeping this secret.

How do we help our children?

Banning our children from using the internet, messaging or playing multiplayer games will create a culture where our children will hide the fact that they are engaging with these sites. It is far more effective to explain why certain sites or apps cannot be used and how our children can keep themselves safe.

Location services: Disable this for the device camera as this can be used to find out where your child lives or goes to school.

Photographs or video; whilst wearing school uniform: This will enable inappropriate people to identify your child.

Reporting abuse: Show your child how they can report something inappropriate.