



The Stable School
Safeguarding Christmas Newsletter
December 2025

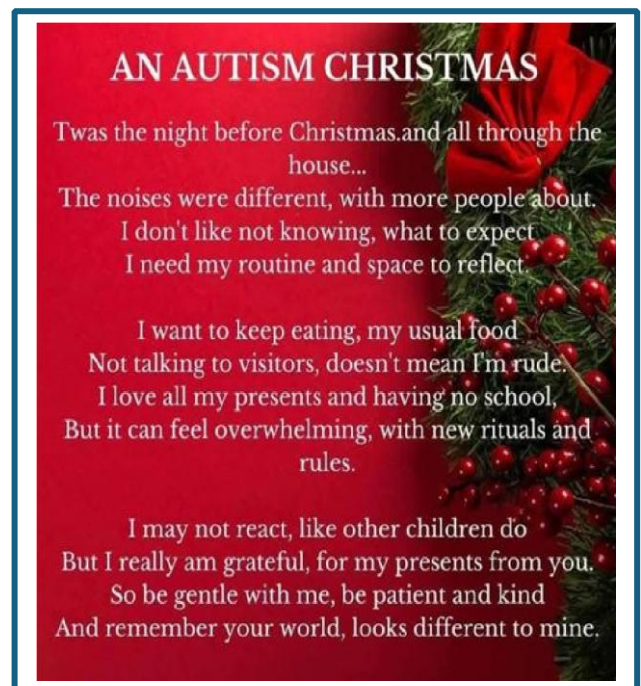


A Thought for the Festive Season.



As we reach the end of term and approach the Christmas period, we remember that every family's experience of this season is unique. For some, it's a time of great excitement and joy; for others, it can feel overwhelming or challenging. Please be kind to yourself and those around you. Take time to pause, breathe, and focus on what matters most to you and your loved ones. Support is always here if you need it.

Wishing you peace and warmth this festive season.





Staying safe online.

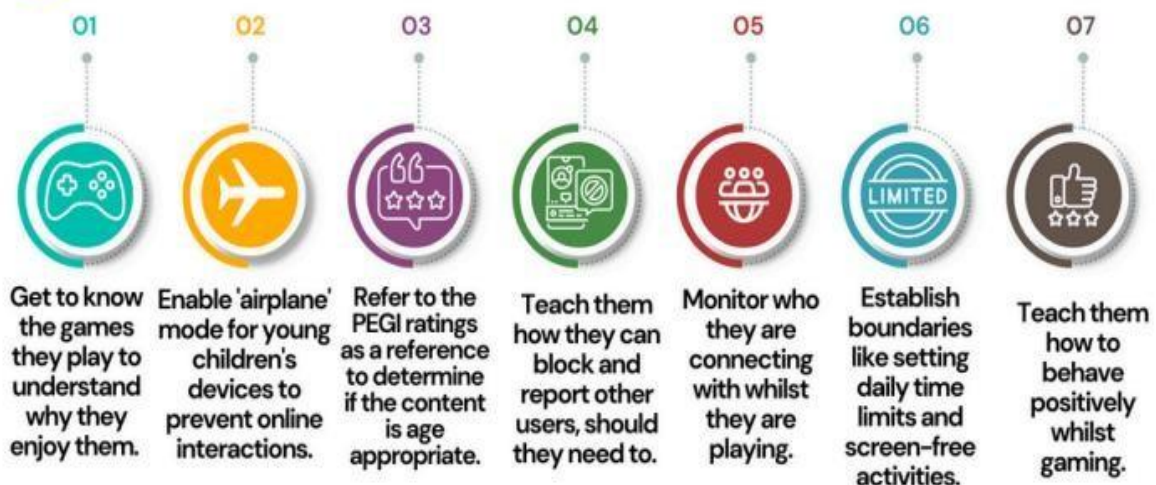


Gaming: Important considerations for parents

1. **Addiction and time management:** Many games are designed to be incredibly engaging, encouraging players to continue playing to achieve new levels or collect rewards. Without proper boundaries, this can lead to excessive screen time, interfering with school responsibilities, chores, and other essential daily tasks.
2. **Impact on mental health:** Excessive gaming has been linked to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and even depression, particularly when it becomes a primary coping mechanism for real-world challenges. Over time, this can affect self-esteem and emotional resilience.
3. **Social isolation:** While many games offer online interactions, too much gaming can sometimes replace face-to-face friendships and family time. Children may choose gaming over in-person socialising, leading to feelings of loneliness.
4. **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Numerous games feature violence, strong language, or mature themes. Even titles marketed for younger audiences can expose children to content that may not be suitable. Multiplayer games might also subject kids to negative behaviours from others, such as cyberbullying or inappropriate remarks.
5. **Sleep disruption and health issues:** Gaming late into the night can disrupt sleep patterns, resulting in fatigue, poor focus, and irritability. Prolonged periods of sitting can also impact physical health, leading to issues like eye strain, headaches, and a lack of exercise.



How to keep your child safe whilst gaming



Discovering the World of Roblox

Roblox is a popular platform that provides users with a diverse selection of games to choose from, as well as the opportunity to connect with others online. It combines the concept of gaming with social media. With over 50 million games created by the community of players, there is no shortage of options to explore. Users can add new friends and communicate with them while playing.

However, there are also risks associated with using Roblox. Some games may be created by adults, potentially exposing children to inappropriate content. Additionally, users can communicate with others while playing, which could lead to grooming, bullying, or unwanted contact. Despite these risks, Roblox does have a level of moderation and offers a range of safety features to protect children.

Roblox



How to Support Your Child When Using Roblox

1. Have your child sign up with the correct age on their account to enable certain safety features by default.
2. Utilise Roblox's game restriction setting to limit the games your child can access. Create a list of games that you find appropriate for your child.
3. Control who your child communicates with on the app by restricting chat to friends only or disabling it altogether.

AI chatbots and companions

A simple search of "AI Chat" within the App store highlights the number of AI apps already available, many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to our children about them and the risks associated with them. Examples of AI chatbots that your child may have heard of are Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+).

What are the risks?

- Over reliance on AI companions, for example they may replace 'real life' friendships or reliance on using them for homework or problem solving.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Privacy/data risks.
- Misinformation as not all information shared is correct and can be biased.

How can I protect my child?

- Check age ratings of any apps or websites that your child accesses.
- Discuss the risks of AI chatbots with them and have open conversations about why they may be using them.
- Set up appropriate parental controls on their devices/ broadband.
- Chat to your child regularly and ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.

Further information

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/ai-chatbots-and-companions-risks-to-children-and-young-people>

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Giving devices safely this Christmas.

Getting a new device for Christmas is exciting - it can open a world of learning, creativity and connection. But it also introduces children to a digital world that isn't always designed with their safety in mind. Setting clear boundaries and protective measures early on helps children learn to use technology in healthy, balanced and age-appropriate ways.

Without guidance, young users can stumble into areas of concern: social media platforms that encourage comparison and oversharing gaming chats that expose them to strangers or apps that collect more personal data than you might expect. These risks don't mean children shouldn't enjoy their new devices - they simply mean they need structure and support to navigate them confidently.

Here are some ways to make sure your child's first steps with a new device are positive ones:



1.Set it up before it gets wrapped.

Before gifting the device, take time to install updates, set parental controls and review privacy settings. This includes switching on filters, limiting app store access and setting up family accounts. Doing this ahead of time keeps Christmas morning focused on joy rather than set up stress - and gives you peace of mind from the start.



2.Agree on clear expectations.

Talk as a family about when and where the device can be used. For example, no phones at the dinner table or gaming at bedtime. These routines help children learn balance and prevent screen time from creeping into every moment of the day.



3.Talk about social media early.

Many social platforms have age limits (typically 13+), but children often feel pressure to join sooner. Keep the conversation open about why these limits exist, what 'friends' really means online and how to handle content that feels uncomfortable or unkind.



4.Guide them through gaming safely.

Games are fun and social, but online play can include chats with strangers or in-game purchases. Encourage your child to only play with people they know, keep personal details private and tell you if something doesn't feel right. Use built-in parental settings on consoles and gaming apps to manage time and communication.



5.Keep passwords and downloads shared.

Agree that you'll know passwords and approve new apps or purchases, at least while your child is learning to manage their own digital choices. This helps you stay involved without needing to hover.



6.Encourage balance.

Screens are just one part of a child's world. Make sure there's time for outdoor play, reading and family time too. Children learn from what they see, so model healthy habits by unplugging together.

Community help and support over the festive period.

<https://bcp.mumbler.co.uk/free-things-to-do-this-christmas-in-bournemouth-christchurch-poole/>

[Christchurch Foodbank+ providing more than just food.](#)

[Home - Hope For Food](#)

[Access to Food Map](#)

[BCP Support at Christmas and with Winter Hardship - Christchurch Learning Centre](#)

[Useful Family Contacts in Dorset](#)

Wellbeing support at Christmas

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/christmas-and-mental-health/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-finding-things-hard-this-christmas-festive-season/>

<https://www.awp.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/leaflets-and-resources/festive-mental-health-resources>

[How can I manage my mental health over Christmas? Practical tips](#)

<https://www.fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/family-information-directory/directory/health-and-wellbeing/counselling-relationships/behaviour/poole-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-camhs>



For anyone who needs some
support right now. ❤️

CALM - 0800585858
Mind - 03001233393
No Panic - 08449674848
Bereavement - 08088081677
PAPYRUS - 08000684141
Samaritans - 116 123
SHOUT - Text SHOUT to 85258
Abuse - 0808 2000 247
Refuge - 020 7395 7700

Stay safe this Christmas.

