



Safer Internet Day 4th February 2025

What's this year's theme?

Safer Internet Day is the UK's biggest celebration of online safety, and the theme each year is chosen to reflect a current issue affecting children and young people online.

This year's theme is 'Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online'. The ideas explored in the theme are:

Spotting the signs of an online scam. The different ways scams can appear online and the forms they can take. Responding to online scams – such as talking to trusted adults, making a report and avoiding victim blaming. New emerging risks online, such as romance scams, catfishing and sextortion.

What can you do?

1. Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.
2. Ask them about how they stay safe online.
3. Ask them if they know where to go for help.

Catfishing Awareness and Safer Schools NI App

You may be aware of a recent news story about an individual in Northern Ireland who was involved in a large-scale catfishing case with devastating consequences. This has highlighted the potential dangers of Catfishing, and we want to ensure that you have the information and tools to keep your child safer online.

What is catfishing?

Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to trick people into forming relationships with them. This can be done for various reasons, including exploitation, scamming or simply to cause emotional harm.

How can the Safer Schools NI help?

Safer Schools NI free app, funded by the department of Education, that provides valuable resources and advice on various online issues including Catfishing. The app includes a new resource, "**Catching a Catfisher**" which provides information on:

- **Identifying Catfishing:** Learn to recognise the signs of a fake profile and deceptive online behaviour.
- **Avoiding Online Scams:** Gain practical tips and strategies to protecting yourself from online scams.
- **Verifying Online Identities:** Discover techniques to confirm the authenticity of online profiles.
- **Staying safe on social media:** Access valuable advice on navigating online platforms safely.

What can you do?

- Download the Safer Schools NI app: Available for free on **Google Play** and the **Apple App Store**.
- Talk to your child about online safety and familiarise yourself with the **Catfishing a Catfisher** resources.
- Remind your child never to share personal information or form relationships with strangers online.

What do you know about SCAM?

- A scam is a way of tricking people into handing over money, personal information or valuable items.
- Scams can happen both online and offline.
- Scams can be seen on websites, games, emails and texts.



Focus on - TikTok

TikTok is a video-sharing platform where you can watch and create videos, and livestream. The app has an **age-rating of 13+**. Users can browse different videos on TikTok via a personalised feed known as the 'For You Page'. You can also search for content using topics or hashtags. The platform uses algorithms to show users different video content based on their interests and other videos they watch. This means that not everyone's 'For You Page' is the same.

Is it safe for children?

It can be easy for children and young people to come across inappropriate content on the app as TikTok uses algorithms to show users new content, it's easy for young people to come across inappropriate or upsetting videos. The platform also has communication features that allow users to privately message each other which could put your child at risk of being contacted by someone they don't know.



How to keep your child safe on TikTok?

Family Pairing

This allows you to connect your child's account with your own. It gives you access to parental controls to help manage who they can speak to and how long they can spend on the app.

Private account

Setting your child's account to private means that only approved followers will be able to watch their videos.

Restricted mode

This feature helps to filter out videos that may contain inappropriate or adult topics and stop them appearing on your child's 'For You Page'.

Comment filters

Enable this to manage who can comment on your child's videos and stop inappropriate comments from appearing on their feed.

Direct messages

This can help them manage who can contact them privately on the app. You can choose who can send them direct messages by selecting 'Friends only' or 'No one'.

Daily screen time

This setting allows you to manage how long your child can spend on the app. You can set a daily time limit, and once it's up you'll need to enter a passcode to keep using the platform.

Remember TikTok has an age rating of 13+.

Visit <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/> for more information.