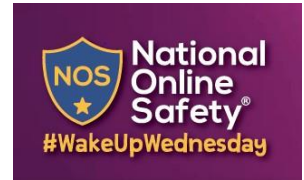




Wheelwright Lane Primary School
Online Safety Newsletter 11.01.23
#WakeUpWednesday



What Parents and Carers Need to Know about:

Spotify

Age rating: 13+

VERY IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

It has recently come to my attention that Spotify is being used inappropriately by online predators to groom younger users. Below is the real-life experience of a young girl and her parents want the story shared as far and wide as possible in the hope that no other children will experience what she has and to make parents aware of what is happening on a seemingly innocent music streaming site.

“Parents PLEASE check ALL the apps your children use, even the ones you don’t think you need to check!

So, we found out this evening that our 11-year-old daughter has been groomed online. I have parental controls set up, I regularly read her messages and check the apps she is using etc. I liked to think that I was pretty well informed when it came to this sort of stuff.

It all happened through Spotify. I didn’t think people could message on Spotify so it wasn’t a place I checked too regularly, and only checked to see what she was listening to.

You can’t send messages on Spotify but people are communicating on there by creating empty public playlists with the title of the playlist being the message they want to send. They can then share that playlist with their intended recipient. Through this very public channel she has been asked to share some very explicit photographs of herself. The only way to share these is to create another blank playlist with the photograph posted as the artwork for the playlist and therefore also the thumbnail. This is not private messages. This is out there for anyone to see. She was also asked for her phone number and email address. She shared a number of very explicit photos and her email address.

Thankfully Spotify deleted her account for breaching policy which is how we found out. We have contacted the police who have taken a lot of details this evening and a more specialised team are going to be in touch tomorrow. We have also contacted Spotify to alert them to the fact that this is happening. Both the police and the three different

advisors I messaged with at Spotify had not come across grooming on this platform before.

I feel physically sick. My head is all over the place. Maybe we have been naive. Maybe I should have checked her stuff far more thoroughly but I genuinely thought we couldn't be in this position. We keep our children off social media and as far away from any platforms we thought this could happen on as possible. Just, please, be aware that things are constantly evolving and even those things you think are safe may well not be. Spotify is a rabbit hole of explicit pictures in playlists once you start to look. It's absolutely terrifying. I am appalled. I think we have only scratched the surface and I have already gone deeper than I ever wish to."

Note: The Police have been informed and are involved.

Further information regarding Music Streaming Apps and Sites can be found in the help sheet below.

If you have any further questions or need any more advice regarding this, or anything regarding online safety, please contact Mrs Hitchins.



Part of our Social Media & Live Streaming Series



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What you need to know about...

MUSIC STREAMING APPS & SITES



Download the App Search Artists

What are they? 'Music Streaming Apps & Sites'

Music streaming apps allow people to listen to music on their devices. It gives users access to millions of songs and artists from around the world. Popular music streaming apps and sites include Spotify, Soundcloud, Apple music, Amazon Prime and Deezer. Music streaming allows children to listen to songs from around the world in a much easier and cheaper way. This enables them to showcase their talent which would have been very hard to do many years back.



Know the Risks

Explicit content !#*!

Explicit content is everywhere online, including in popular music. Children can easily access songs on Spotify, for example, that may have explicit or inappropriate language not suitable for children. It is also easy to erase searches so you can't see what a child has been listening to.

Adult themed podcasts

Many music streaming apps also offer the ability to listen to podcasts which can vary across any kind of topic, from business and health to comedy and relationships. Again, children could be exposed to content which is more adult themed or contains age-inappropriate language.

Chatting to strangers

Some music apps, like Playlist, want to make music a more social experience by finding others who share the same musical tastes and will allow users to join group chats where they listen to a playlist together in real time. This could open up your child to talking to strangers online.



Safety Tips

Use child friendly apps

Many music streaming services are made just for children. For instance, the Spotify kids app provides parents with control over what their children listen to and all the content is family friendly and fun for children to explore.



Turn off explicit content

Most of the major music streaming apps will provide the option to turn off explicit material to make sure the music is completely clean. Some services even offer an option to lock the content censoring settings with a password, so your child can't switch it back.

Implement privacy controls

Check the privacy setting of your child's app. Ensure that whichever app or site they choose to stream music, the settings are set to be private. This way they can only share the music they are listening too with friends and family and can't engage in conversation with strangers.

Offering Support

Explore apps yourself

If your child insists on wanting to use a music streaming app then be part of the journey with them. Take the time to understand which apps they prefer to use and why they want to use it. Find out how to use the app yourself and understand what they could be exposed to and how to ensure they get the most of it in a safe manner.

Regularly check-in

Have regular conversations with your child about what they are listening to and how they are feeling. If they do hear explicit music or content that makes them feel uncomfortable, let them know that they can always talk to you and discuss what they've heard and what it means.

Our Expert Parven Kaur



Parven Kaur is social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks; a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.

