

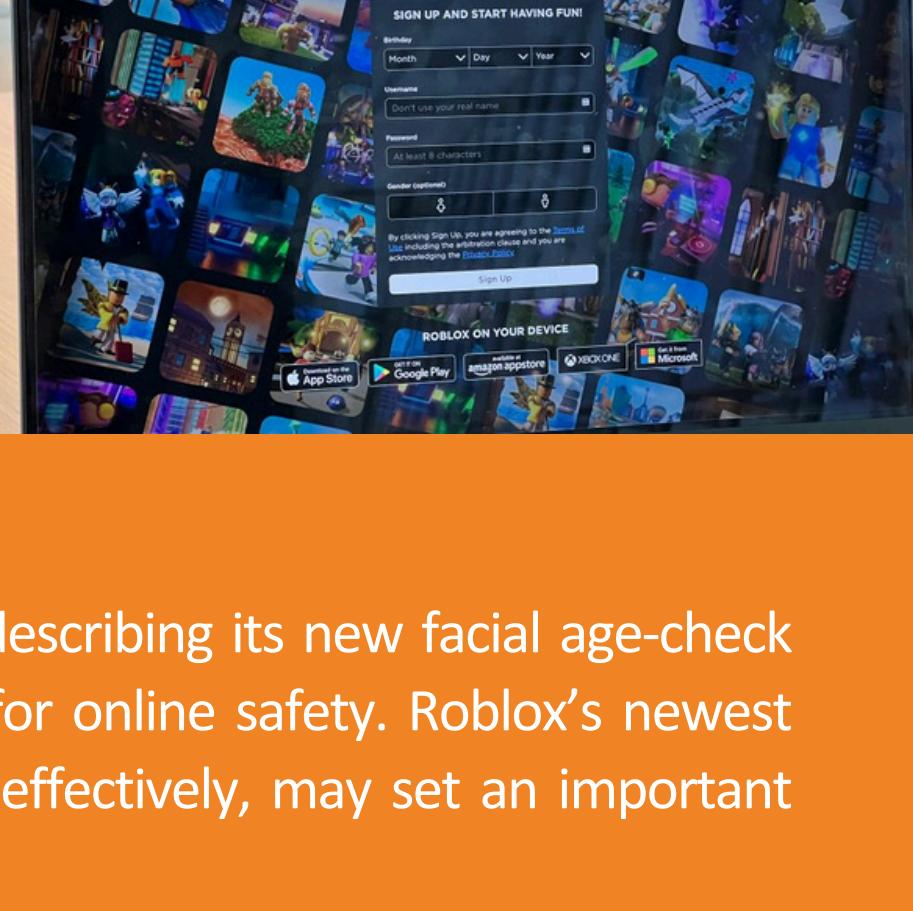
Welcome to Witham St Hughs Academy's Safeguarding Newsletter. Keeping children safe is of course, our key priority here at school. Safeguarding takes many forms including: Protecting children from harm; preventing impairment of children's health and development; enabling safe and effective parenting and giving children equal opportunities in life.

We do many things every day in school to ensure pupils are safe including: ensuring all staff are trained in safeguarding; having clear policies and procedures in place to keep children safe; monitoring pupil attendance; ensuring a safe and healthy site; ensuring the behaviour of pupils is in line with the Academy behaviour policy and using our curriculum to teach children about risk taking, diversity, healthy lifestyles, managing relationships, online safety and much more. Our safeguarding policy is always available to view via our website.

What school will do if we have a safeguarding concern

All school staff receive regular training on a wide variety of safeguarding topics. They know the key areas of abuse to look out for, and the signs that there may be a concern. Equally, children or families will sometimes share a concern directly with a member of staff. Where a member of staff has a concern, they will speak to the child involved to find out some more information. Staff will never ask a child leading questions or put words into their mouth. Staff will never form a judgement based on what they have been told, but they will simply listen and reassure the child. If a staff member then has a concern about a child, they will report this to one of the 'Designated Safeguarding Leads' (DSL) and/or log this on our safeguarding system. If we have a concern about your child, and it is safe to do so, a DSL will always call you to discuss this within the same school day. Parents and carers are pivotal to this process, and school will always work alongside parents and carers to ensure the best interest of every child.

Focus on: Supervision



Ensuring children are appropriately supervised is of course a core safeguarding concern for both parents and the Academy team.

Appropriate supervision means providing oversight that is tailored to the child's needs, the activity's complexity, and the potential risks, ensuring the child has the necessary skills and support to be safe. It involves being physically available, knowing the child's location, and adjusting the level and frequency of support and supervision to match the situation.

Parents and carers will of course make their own decisions around levels of supervision and independence they deem safe and appropriate for their own child, balancing the need for a growing sense of independence, competence and learning alongside safety and wellbeing.

As an Academy, we would encourage parents and carers to regularly re-assess the benefits and risks of unsupervised time for children. For example, when weather conditions in winter mean frozen bodies of water become a risk, we would encourage parents to adjust levels of supervision accordingly. Equally, as children become more mature, confident and independent, increased responsibility such as walking to the shop alone may become appropriate.

As always, this is a decision for individual families to take and one that may differ between households. School are always available to support parents and carers in their decision-making process.

Online Safety: Roblox



Roblox Announces Facial Age Checks for Chat Features

Roblox has announced a major update to its safety features, describing its new facial age-check requirement for chat features as a potential "gold standard" for online safety. Roblox's newest measures are an ambitious step forward and if implemented effectively, may set an important precedent for other platforms to follow.

Roblox's introduction of mandatory facial age checks for chat access represents a notable shift in how online platforms may approach user verification in the future. Roblox will soon assign users towards age groups using facial checks whilst restricting cross-group communication. Roblox has also defaulted experience-based chat to "off" for under-9s (unless a parent explicitly agrees) as an additional part of their new update. This is a move for Roblox to reduce inappropriate contact between adults and younger users as well as work towards keeping younger people in safer digital spaces when using chat features.

Roblox emphasises that the facial age estimation process uses privacy-protective methods, with images processed solely for age verification and then deleted immediately. Protecting children's biometric data is critical, and it is positive to see Roblox acknowledging that trust in such a process, hinges on transparency and robust safeguards.

While these initiatives are promising, their success will ultimately depend on:

- Implementation quality: Are these age checks reliable, accurate, and accessible for global users?
- Impact: Will these processes evidently reduce harmful interactions and improve safety for users?

If these measures operate as intended, they could pave the way for a new industry standard, encouraging other platforms to adopt similar age-sensitive approaches.



Our Website

Our Academy website has a host of information regarding safeguarding, our DSL's and our safeguarding practices within school.

Importantly, it also has a variety of really useful resources for parents and carers. These include resources from NSPCC, Healthy Minds and Childline to name a few.

Parents and carers will also find many links to online safety resources including the 'National Online Safety' posters which share some really helpful guidance on setting parental controls across a whole host of different apps, websites and devices.

<https://withamsthughssacademy.co.uk/safeguarding/>

Useful Numbers

Social Services: 01522 782111

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Lincolnshire Prevent Team: 020 7340 7264

Young Carers Helpline: 01522 553275

NSPCC Whistle Blowing helpline: 08088 005000

FGM helpline: 08000 283550

Samaritans: 01522 528282

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