



# Gaelscoil an Chaistil

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## Sábháilteacht ar líne – Úsáid na meáin shóisialta agus gutháin póca Online safety – Social Media and Mobile Phone use

Do thuismitheoirí agus chaomhnóirí / For parents and guardians

A chara,

Ba mhaith liom teagmháil a dhéanamh leat faoi úsáid na meáin shóisialta i measc ár ndaltaí.

Aithníonn muid go bhfuil guthán póca ag roinnt mhaith dár ndaltaí in Eochairchéim a Dó (Rang 5 go 7). Leis sin, aithníonn muid go mbíonn siad úsáideach do pháistí chun teagmháil a dhéanamh le teaghlach agus le cairde, agus chun aipeanna fóirsteanacha foghlama a úsáid.

Ar an drochuair, tá cuid dár ndaltaí páirteach i ngrúpaí WhatsApp lena chéile agus is léir le tamall nach bhfuil na grúpaí seo maith dóibh, ó thaobh forbairt shóisialta de agus ó thaobh meabhairshláinte de. Tá muid buartha faoi líon na dteachtaireachtaí atá cuid páistí ag cur agus faoi na focail mhíchineálta a bhíonn in úsáid i dteachtaireachtaí fosta. Tá tionchar diúltach acu ar na páistí, ar scoil agus taobh amuigh di.

Mar scoil, labhraíonn muid leis na páistí go minic faoi mhí-úsáid teicneolaíochta agus faoin tionchar atá ag aipeanna agus ag na meáin shóisialta ar pháistí óga go háirithe. Faraor, gan ionchur tuismitheora, leanfaidh an fhadhb seo ar aghaidh. Tá a fhios ag na páistí faoin iompar a ba chóir a bheith ann ar líne. Is é 13 + aois ceadaithe Snapchat agus 16 + aois ceadaithe WhatsApp.

Níl cead ag páistí gutháin a úsáid le linn am scoile, agus má dhéanann siad é sin, coinníonn a múinteoir an guthán go am baile. Tá an scéal amhlaidh faoi uaireadóirí cliste, má tá siad sin ag do pháiste. Níl cead iad a úsáid ar scoil. Tá na teachtaireachtaí seo á gcur taobh amuigh den lá scoile agus mar sin de, iarrann muid ort bheith freagrach as iompar do pháiste ar na haipeanna seo. Iarrann muid ort labhairt le do pháistí faoi iompar ar líne agus súil a choinneáil ar a n-iompar féin.

Iarrann muid oraibh cinntiú nach bhfuil do pháiste páirteach i ngrúpa ar bith mar seo. Is furasta éalú ó ghrúpa nó aipeanna a bhaint ó na gutháin.

Go bunúsach, ba mhaith linn go mbeidh buntaistí an Idirlín/gutháin póca ag ár ndaltaí ach ba mhaith linn go mbeidh gach páiste slán sábháilte. Leis seo gheobhaidh tú giota eolais faoi na haipeanna.

Go raibh maith agat as ucht do thacaíochta agus do chomhoibrithe

A chara,

I would like to contact you regarding the use of social media amongst our pupils.

We recognize that a lot of our Key Stage 2 (Rang 5 to 7) pupils have mobile phones. We recognize also that these phones are useful in helping children to stay in touch with family and with friends and to use suitable educational apps.

Unfortunately, some of our pupils are members of WhatsApp groups and it has been obvious for some time that these groups are not good for them, in regards their social development and their mental well-being. We are worried about the amount of messages being sent by children and about the unkind comments in some of these messages. They are having a negative impact on the children, both inside and outside of school.

As a school, we regularly speak to the pupils about the misuse of technology and about the impact that certain apps and social media have, particularly on young children. However, without input from parents, this problem is likely to continue. The children know what they should be doing and what they should not be doing online and when using a mobile. Snapchat's minimum age of use is 13 years + and WhatsApp's minimum age of use is 16 years +.

Children are not permitted to use phones during the school day and if they are found to be doing so, their teacher will confiscate their phone until hometime. This is also the case for smart watches, if your child has one of these. Their use at school isn't permitted. These messages are being sent outside of the school day and as such we ask you to ensure that you are aware of your child's behaviour on these apps. We would ask you to talk to your children about appropriate online behaviour and ask you to continue to monitor their online behaviour

We would ask you to ensure that your child doesn't participate in groups like this. It is easy to leave these groups or indeed to remove apps from the phones.

Essentially, we want the children to know the benefits of the internet/mobile phones but we need all children to be safe and secure.

I include some information about these apps.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

*Bridgette N. O'Sullivan*

## Snapchat

Snapchat remains a popular app for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. The app has some privacy settings which we would recommend you explore with your child and suggest why certain options are safer, for example, setting your account so only friends (rather than everyone) can see your content.

What should I be aware of?

- Who is your child friends with – talk to your child about who they are friends with and why it is safer to be friends with only those they know in real life.
- Group chats - in a group chat, there may be people that they're not friends with on the app who can then communicate with them in the group chat, which increases their risk of interacting with strangers.
- Snap Map - The map lets users see where friends are. Location sharing via the map is optional and is off by default (we recommend that it remains off).
- Snapchat streaks - Streaks count how many consecutive days two people have been sending Snaps to each other, this can increase pressure to respond daily.
- Inappropriate content – due to the nature of the app, your child may come across content that is inappropriate.
- Screenshots – whilst Snaps disappear, users may take screenshots before they do, potentially resulting in them losing control of what they have shared as it could be sent to other people.
- Bullying – there is a risk of bullying on all platforms so please ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.
- <https://snap.com/safety/safety-reporting/>
- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/a/remove-block-friends>

## Safety tips

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and make sure that they know that they should always talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns. Please make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up and your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary.

- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2>

## Further information

- Parents' Ultimate Guide to Snapchat: <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-snapchat>

## WhatsApp: group chats

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows you to send messages and videos. You must be at least 16 years old to register for and use WhatsApp.

### Group chats

One of the main features is that it has a Group chat function that is set up by one person (who is the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group. You can leave a group chat at any point so talk to your child and encourage them to leave any chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### Change Group Privacy settings

In settings, you can change who can add your child to groups, for example, you can change the settings to 'my contacts', which means that only those in your child's contacts can add them to a group.

### Online Bullying

WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying, for example sending nasty messages or sharing images of other children without their permission to embarrass them. It's important to have regular chats with your child about their online life and that they understand that they must talk to you or another trusted adult if they are being bullied.

This is a helpful article from BullyingUK which talks about what to do if you are being bullied online: <https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/>

### Blocking/Reporting

If your child is using WhatsApp, then show them how to block and report a contact. You can find out how here: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-a-contact>

### Be Kind

How we behave online should be the same as how we behave face to face. This YouTube video from Dr Linda Papadopoulos tells us how we can encourage our children to be kind online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q>

### Further information

- <https://www.whatsapp.com/safety/>