



# The Ripley Academy and Sixth Form

Executive Headteacher: **Mrs H Frost-Briggs** BA (Hons)



We are **AMBITIOUS**. We are **COMMITTED**. We are **PROUD**.

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Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

As we approach the end of this calendar year, we would like to thank you for your continued support in keeping our children safe.

During the holiday season it is vital that we keep our children as secure as possible and so, during our two-week break and at any time out of school hours, if you have any immediate concerns for the safety of a child please contact either:

Call Derbyshire (Derbyshire County Council Social Services) 01629 533190

First Contact (Derby City Council Social Services) 01332 641172

Please find other useful websites and telephone numbers at the end of this letter (including food banks and financial support).

## Cost of Living Crisis

This winter continues to be challenging for all, in many different ways. Attached is information from Derbyshire County Council regarding free benefits checks. If your circumstances have changed, you may wish to access this service to ensure you are in receipt of all benefits for which you are eligible. There are a number of warm spaces accessible to all, across Amber Valley. You can find a full list on the DCC website: [Warm spaces - Derbyshire County Council](#)

We have a large amount of uniform items within school which are available to all students. If your child has grown out of an item, you may wish to donate the item and swap it for a larger size. All donations and swaps are welcome!

Should you require any assistance in accessing financial support during these difficult times, please do not hesitate to contact school. All requests will be treated confidentially and with sensitivity. Our staff have knowledge of a number of agencies that may be able to help.

## Online safety

The pastoral team has seen an increase in concerns linked to online safety and social media in particular. We are updating our curriculum in order to address this and ask for your support in reinforcing this at home.

Children in Amber Valley are now spending an average of 5 hours a day online. It is always timely to revisit this at Christmas as children receive new devices and some of our younger students may be receiving their first mobile phones. Mobile network EE run a service called Phonesmart which may be of use to you and your child Parent - Homepage ([Parent - Homepage \(eephonesmart.co.uk\)](#)) (you do not need to be on EE to use this).

The NSPCC website has a wealth of information linked to online safety and parental controls: [Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

**The Ripley Academy, Peasehill, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3JQ**

Also attached is a poster from National Online Safety which gives advice on setting up apps on your child's new or existing device

We would like to thank you as ever in your continuing support in the education of your child.

With warmest wishes from the 'Safeguarding Team' as we enter the festive period. Take care of yourselves and each other.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J de Rijk

Head of School

#### **Other useful contact information**

Child Line 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

Kooth - [Home - Kooth](#) (online support with mental wellbeing for young people)

Samaritans 08457 909090

Young Minds Parent Helpline (Children's health and wellbeing) 0808 805 5544 (9.30-16.00 weekdays)

Mind (Advice for mental health including self-harming) 0808 800 5000

Police 101 (or 999 in an emergency)

Safe and Sound (suspicion that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation) 01332 362120

Frank (National Drugs Helpline) 0300 123 6600

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

Drink Line 0800 917 8282 ([www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk))

NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 1690169

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency

(CEOP) [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

Radicalisation/Extremist behaviour advice 0800 789 321 (Derbyshire Police Website)

Victim Support line 0808 1689 111 ([www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk))

Derbyshire Children Safeguarding Board [www.derbyscb.org.uk](http://www.derbyscb.org.uk)

Runaway Help Line 116 000 ( [Homepage - Runaway Helpline](#) )

Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Helpline 08000 198 668 or text 07534 617252 (8am-10pm Monday-Friday)

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000247 (24 hours)

#### **Financial support and food banks**

Citizen's Advice Bureau ( [Citizens Advice](#) ) 0808 278 7954 (Heanor)

Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (emergency payments) 01629 533399 Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) - Derbyshire County Council

Salcare ( [Home - Salcare](#) ) 01773 764562

Oscari food bank and community pantry (Alfreton) 07570 307195

Salvation Army food bank (Ripley) 01773 741932



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

## TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at [videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games](http://videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games).

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## 'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

## DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

## CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like [systemrequirementslab.com](http://systemrequirementslab.com) can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

## MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

## BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers; they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

## APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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## CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

## WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnight rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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## LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

## IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

## STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

## Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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# THE DANGERS OF FROZEN WATER

## TOP TIPS TO STAY SAFE

### NEVER GO ON THE ICE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

This includes attempting to rescue another person or animal who may have fallen through the ice.

### ONLY USE WELL LIT AREAS

Try to take walks in the daylight but if you must walk in the evening, only use well lit areas and avoid anywhere with water.

### KEEP AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF THE WATER

Never go close to the edge or lean over to touch the ice. You may over balance or trip and fall in.

### ALWAYS WALK WITH AN ADULT OR A GROUP OF FRIENDS

Look out for each other and if someone does fall through the ice there will be others around to raise the alarm and get help

Every year children are at risk when they are tempted to play on the ice formed on open waters and adults find themselves at risk as they attempt to save them. Over 50 % of ice related drowning involved an attempted rescue of another person or a dog.

Areas with frozen waters can be beautiful to look at but they are also extremely dangerous. Here are some useful tips to help you enjoy these areas safely.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Keep calm and shout 'help'

Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you

Try to kick your legs and pull yourself out of the water and on to the ice

Lie flat, spreading your weight across the surface and pull yourself to the bank. you may find it easier to roll.

If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Keep your head above the water, press your arms by your side and keep your legs together

Once you are safe, it is important that you go to hospital immediately for a check up



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Shout for **'HELP'** and dial **999** or **112** if you can

**DO NOT** walk on to the ice to attempt a rescue

Shout to the person to **'KEEP STILL'** and offer reassurance.

If they are close enough, **LIE DOWN TO AVOID OVERBALANCING** and falling onto the ice, and try to reach them with a tree branch clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.

If you cannot reach them, **SLIDE SOMETHING** which floats across the ice, such as a plastic bottle or a football, so that they can hold on to it to stay afloat whilst help is on the way.

If they are too far away, **WAIT FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES** and reassure the casualty from the safety of the bank.