**Moving to Secondary**

**Presentation script**

To accompany the PowerPoint/PDF presentation for parents of children transitioning from Primary to Secondary school, we’ve created this script. Use it to support your presentation in whatever way best helps, including editing where it makes sense.

# **Slide 1**

*[Include your welcome message here if applicable]*

As your child transitions from Year 6 to Year 7, you can expect a lot of changes – larger or different friendship groups, more subject matter, greater amounts of homework. But they’ll also engage with technology and the internet in a lot more ways.

This presentation is designed to help you stay on top of those digital changes to keep your child safe online as they grow.

The QR code on screen will take you to a page with a range of resources to help you. We’ll share it at the end of the presentation as well.

# **Slide 2**

According to research from Ofcom, children in Secondary (aged 12-15) are more likely to use a mobile phone to go online. They are also more likely to use social media apps and platforms.

While this is mostly passive use such as viewing content and ‘liking’ rather than commenting or creating their own content, at Secondary there is an increase in children interacting with others on social media.

This might include friends from school but can also include relative strangers in online communities they’re a part of.

Use of AI tools also increases. For many, this means playing around with tools; for some, this might mean using AI for school. While there are great things these tools can do, we encourage you to explore the tools and help children use them for support rather than doing schoolwork for them.

*[Include your school’s guidance on AI if applicable]*

Ofcom also notes that teens are increasingly using social media and other apps to learn about news. Not all of this information is true, so critical thinking is extremely important. You can find some resources through QR codes at the end of this presentation to help you. Or you can visit internetmatters.org for support.

# **Slide 3**

Let’s look at a little information about what research shows. This is based on a survey from online safety organisation, Internet Matters, which asks children about their online habits.

You can see that from ages 9-10, which is about the end of Primary, to the ages of 11-12, which is about the start of Secondary, children’s use of certain technology increases.

More children are watching videos on apps like YouTube and TikTok, more are using search engines and websites for school. There’s also a move towards messaging apps and social media as children go into Secondary. These numbers also increase as children get older.

# **Slide 4**

This is an overview of some of the apps you should be aware of. You can see for social media and messaging apps, there is a noted increase in Secondary school among children. Again, this is a time when they’re becoming more social and want to connect with others. So, this is not surprising.

But it’s also important to know that WhatsApp, TikTok and Snapchat have an age requirement of 13. So, all of these children are actually using platforms underage, which puts them at risk.

If they join something like Snapchat underage, they must lie about their age. The problem with this is that children lying about their age will often use parents’ birthdays because they’re easier to remember. However, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and other social media apps actually have specific safety measures in place for users aged 13-18 – this is called safety by design. If they pretend to be you, they don’t have those features.

# **Slide 5**

Here is an overview of these safety by design measures. So on TikTok and Instagram, users’ accounts are private by default if they are aged 13 to 16; 13 to 18 for Snapchat. There are limits to who can directly message children who are underage. The apps encourage screen time breaks and Family Centres as well, which allow you an overview to keep them safe.

If your child pretends to be over-18, they miss out on all of these things and are at even greater risk of contact from people they don’t know.

# **Slide 6**

The Internet Matters survey I mentioned before also asked children about their experiences online. You can see that, again, as children start Secondary, some of these issues increase.

It’s interesting to note that children do recognise that feeling of ‘too much screen time’, so it’s important to make use of parental controls and conversations to help them manage this.

Children are also increasingly unsure about the information they see online and whether it’s true.

Additionally, they report seeing bullying and hateful behaviours online, increasing as they grow and perhaps engage with different online communities.

# **Slide 7**

When it comes to knowing how to stay safe on different platforms, children become a little more savvy as they grow. You can see an increase from Primary to Secondary when it comes to knowing how to use privacy settings, unfollowing or unsubscribing from content and knowing how to block accounts.

These are really key skills to have that allows children to take ownership of their safety. It’s worth asking them to show you these features on their favourite platforms and asking them when they should use them.

# **Slide 8**

This is especially necessary because even though we see half of children at Secondary saying they know how to take these actions, only 31% are actually using privacy settings.

Again, these behaviours increase at Secondary, but there’s still a mismatch between knowledge and taking action, so talking about the importance of these tools is key.

Blocking stops users from contacting your child; unfollowing and unsubscribing keeps them from seeing unwanted content; privacy settings keeps their information and data safe, and also limits who can see them or talk to them.

And although it’s not up here, reporting content is what gets it removed from platforms, and is a great way to encourage children to be upstanders online.

# **Slide 9**

That’s a quick overview of what children are increasingly doing online as they move on to Secondary. But the key things to remember are:

* Children are becoming more social, which introduces additional risk of contact from strangers, which could lead to harms like grooming, nude-sharing and sextortion.
* Children will also have to manage more accounts and devices for school *[If applicable, give specific examples of devices they will use at your school and accounts they might use like Hegarty Maths, Accelerated Reader, SatchelOne, Google Classroom, etc.]*. So, they will need to understand privacy and security, especially not sharing passwords with friends.
* At Secondary, children from a range of Primary schools will meet others at Secondary, creating larger and new social groups. This means more connection, but can also lead to peer pressure, especially online, as well as issues such as cyberbullying.
* And, at this age, children will start to experiment more with interests and curiosity. Sometimes, this might lead to inappropriate content or arguments, so calm conversations and check-ins are key.

*[You might wish to talk about ways you will support parents if they need it here]*

# **Slide 10**

For those of you who have children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, research does show that they tend to benefit more from being online. This is also true for children in care or who are carers themselves, or who have mental health vulnerabilities or are even part of the LGBTQ+ community.

For these groups, however, there’s also an increased risk.

While the ways they stay safe online is the same – blocking users, reporting content, using parental controls – how you support your child and guide them will change.

For example, an autistic child or child with ADHD might require a lot of visual cues and reminders.

You will know how your child processes information and the support they need, and we can help with guidance. There’s also a lot of support on the Internet Matters website to help.

# **Slide 11**

So, knowing all of that, there are 3 key things that can help you manage your child’s transition into Secondary school when it comes to digital.

They are: talking about safety, using parental controls and staying informed.

# **Slide 12**

When it comes to online safety, regular conversations is a key part. And it’s best done as a part of regular conversations – like asking them about their school day is – instead of as something tense or in response to trouble.

So, ask them about their day online. Ask them to show you their favourite platform and those safety features – maybe even use the platform with them, especially where you can play a video game together. Talk about news stories, but keep conversations casual, and let them take charge when it comes to teaching you about their online world.

# **Slide 13**

Along with conversations, parental controls are so important. They’re not about stopping your child from doing things they enjoy; they’re about adding features to help them enjoy those things safely – like a training wheels on a bike, which help them learn to ride safely before getting removed. Parental controls give children the space and tools to benefit from their online space.

So, easy things to do are setting up controls and limits on your home broadband network and the mobile network your child’s device uses.

Once they reach minimum ages for social media, make use of Family Centre and similar parental features. These tools also exist in video games like Roblox and Fortnite.

You can also use apps like Google Family Link or Apple Screen Time to set whole-family controls across devices, which might be easier than going into each app (though doing this as well is a good idea).

And remember that as your child grows or their interests change, you should talk to them and involve them in conversations around the choices made to keep them safe online.

# **Slide 14**

Finally, it’s really important to keep on top of new apps and new issues. Internet Matters is really great for this, so joining their newsletter list could be really helpful.

But taking an active interest in what your child enjoys through those conversations can also help. It might give you a starting point for what to look up online and can also keep you clued up on new safety features.

Regulation like the Online Safety Act will mean platforms might introduce new changes, so keep an eye out in the news.

# **Slide 15**

One tool that is really useful for all 3 of these things is the Family Digital Toolkit from Internet Matters. You can scan the QR code on screen or save the web address for later.

Spend ten minutes answering questions about your family’s digital use, your concerns and your child’s interests to get a personalised toolkit. You’ll then have all the conversation and parental controls guides that you need as well as more information about safety.

We highly recommend doing this to make finding the information you need easier.

# **Slide 16**

That concludes this presentation, and we thank you for listening. We hope you take action and come to us if you have any concerns or questions.

You can visit internetmatters.org for information and resources, or you can scan the QR code here to access their Moving to Secondary guide and resources.

Thank you.

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