

Online Safety News

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Unregulated Gambling Sites

A growing number of unregulated sites operate without ID verification or age checks or payment controls. Regulated, licensed gambling sites, do have those barriers to prevent under 18's accessing their site.

Research (The Irish Times) shows that black-market sites make gambling accessible to children and this can double the chance of problem gambling later in life.

Many of the games children play today contain mechanics that mirror gambling almost exactly, such as FIFA packs, Roblox purchases, loot boxes where you pay real or in-game money for a randomised reward you can't see in advance.

- ✓ The excitement of not knowing what you'll get
- ✓ The urge to try again when it wasn't what you hoped for
- ✓ The thrill when it lands well and wanting to 'go again'

What You Need to Know

- Unregulated overseas gambling websites are allowing children to sign up with no identity checks whatsoever – these are known as "no KYC" platforms (KYC = Know Your Client)
- These sites can look completely professional – polished branding, live odds, easy sign-up – with no obvious red flag to a young person
- Many actively advertise the fact that they don't require ID
- Cryptocurrency is accepted, there are no deposit limits, no self-exclusion tools, and no real legal protection if something goes wrong

 **For more support: [Guide to help manage kid's online money habits](#) | [Internet Matters](#)**

Social Media is 13+

Betting influencers are all over the platforms children use every day – TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram. The wins are loud, celebratory and everywhere. The losses are rarely discussed. For a young person watching, it can look like a glamorous lifestyle, not a risk and is another reminder why these platforms are not suitable for children under 13.

Your Child's Digital Footprint – What One Click Actually Shares



Every time a child taps "accept" on an app, game or website, they're sharing far more than they realise. It's not just a name, it can be their location, their interests, their friendships and even their daily routine. And that information doesn't disappear.

- **24% have shared their real name or address online**, with eight and nine-year-olds most at risk.
- **22% have shared personal information** such as health details with AI tools. (Information Commissioner's Office)



Chat regularly with your child about online privacy;
Choose carefully what personal information to share;
Check privacy settings on new devices and app

For more guidance ico.org.uk/SwitchedOn

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Age Checks Online



A recent report by Internet Matters stated

- **Age checks are common, but children are bypassing them:** Whilst 53% of children tell us they have had to verify their age, a third (32%) report having bypassed age checks, and 26% of parents admit allowing their child to do this.
- Children have bypassed age checks — entering a fake birthday, using a VPN, or even drawing on facial hair

The risks of bypassing age checks include



Content — A simple click claiming to be 18 is often all it takes for children to access pornographic, violent or self-harm promoting material online

Contact — Unmoderated spaces are actively targeted by predators and groomers who know children using them are less guarded

Conduct — Children who regularly access adult spaces can absorb and replicate the behaviour they see, including aggression, oversharing personal details and exposure to blackmail

Commerce — Without safeguards, children are one tap away from gambling sites, loot boxes, and fake VPNs that harvest their personal data

Minecraft Safety Tips



Minecraft is one of the most popular games among primary-age children, and it can be genuinely creative and engaging. But like any online game, there are things worth knowing to keep your child safe.

What is it?

Minecraft is an adventure game where players collect resources and build structures to create their own world. There is no story and no end point, which means children can easily play for far longer than intended without realising.

Is it suitable for my child's age?

Minecraft has a PEGI 7 rating in the UK, making it suitable for children aged seven and over. However the online elements — including chat and multiplayer — introduce risks that the age rating alone doesn't account for.

What are the risks?

- Players can communicate directly with each other via private messages — known as "whispers" — and not every player will be who they say they are. Adults can and do play Minecraft, and worlds created by other players may include sexual or mature content [childnet](#)
- Downloading 'mods' modifications that change the game and add new features, can put children at risk of downloading viruses and malware
- Minecraft allows in-game purchases including accessories, skins and access to new worlds. It's worth checking whether your payment details are saved on your child's device
- Server chat is set up by individual players and is not officially moderated. This is different from Realms, which is moderated by Minecraft itself [Parent Zone](#)

Steps you can take:

- Ensure your child only join Realms. Invitation-only servers where they play with people they know in real life
- Set up parental controls including a profanity filter and chat restrictions — step-by-step guidance is available at [Keep Children Safe Online: Information, advice, support](#)
- Have a conversation about how much time you are both comfortable with them playing, and be consistent [Childnet](#)
- There is also a large Minecraft community on YouTube. It is worth checking your YouTube parental controls if your child watches Minecraft content.