What parents need to know about LiveMe

ONLINE PREDATORS

Law enforcement agencies have warned that LiveMe is placing children at risk from online predators. A sheriff in Texas even issued a warning that paedophiles have a virtual open window to your child’s bedroom. Live chat can be used by groomers to target young people who may be vulnerable to manipulation. LiveMe claims it has a child protection system that uses AI to block users from talking to each other in private. In 2016, a 16-year-old girl in the UK was jailed for posing as a teenage boy to groom young girls on LiveMe, and offered virtual currency in exchange for teenagers exposing themselves.

INAPPROPRIATE & ADULT CONTENT

Live streaming paper can potentially expose young people to graphic and inappropriate content. LiveMe says it is ‘seriously intended to be used by individuals 17 years of age or older, and those under 18 should have their parents’ permission to download and use the app, but there are no age verification checks. As soon as you tap the app or watch a stream, you are greeted with scantily clad adult broadcasters posing suggestively with captions, such as ‘join me in bed’. Even the platform itself even have inappropriate usernames. There is every chance your child will watch content that is not suitable for them or be encouraged to share similar content themselves.

SPENDING MONEY ON VIRTUAL GIFTS

Coins are the LiveMe currency. Viewers and broadcasters can buy coins and use them to purchase gifts, or do mini drops to interact with one another. When viewers send gifts, they immediately earn the same number of diamonds. Once someone has made a certain level of diamonds, they can cash them out for real money or convert them back into virtual currency.

REPORT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

If someone has been acting inappropriately, you are encouraged to report this to LiveMe. The app has a ‘Report’ option. However, it is worth remembering that it is not wise to screenshot and save inappropriate material.

BLOCKING PEOPLE

Explain to your child that if they notice inappropriate behaviour, bullying, or any other rule-breaking conduct on LiveMe, they can block a user from chatting on their broadcast and profile by tapping on their name, navigating to the profile page, and then choosing ‘block’.

RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASES

Stop your children from making in-app purchases by changing the app and device settings. For example, you can change the settings so a password is required to proceed with a transaction. Advise your child not to buy anything posted by someone else.

LOCATION SHARING

Publishing live video can give away clues to your child’s identity and location. Predators will search video information about the background that gives details about your child, such as street names or school uniforms. Explain to your child that they need to carefully consider where and when they broadcast live.

THINK BEFORE YOU BROADCAST

As with anything that is posted and shared with others online, remember that once it is up, it is hard to take back. Once videos are shared online, they become public. Videos can attract the attention of sex offenders or someone may threaten to share videos with others unless the child sends them money or more videos.

BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS

Remind your child to always consider what they are about to comment on and to think about whether they would do that in the ‘real world’ or may regret posting at a later date. Encourage your child to think about the language they use online and to think carefully before commenting on content posted by someone else.

DISCUSS Sexting

Although it is an awkward subject, it is important to explain to children that creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal. A young person is breaking the law if they take an explicit video of themselves or share a video of a child, even if it’s shared between children of the same age.

Be sure to encourage your child to always think carefully before commenting on content posted by others online.