Twitter is a social networking site where users can post tweets or short messages, photos and videos publicly. It also allows them to interact with celebrities, stay up to date with news, trends and current social relevance.

**TWITTER TROLLS**

A ‘troll’ is somebody who deliberately posts negative or offensive comments online in a bid to provoke an individual or a reaction. Trolling, can include bullying, harassment, stalking, virtual mobility and much more. It is very common on Twitter. The motive may be that the ‘troll’ wishes to promote an opinion or make a point, however, the pragmatics of what they post could be much more damaging, posting anything from racist, homophobic to sexist tweets. Trolling can lead to devastating consequences for some victims.

**INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**

Twitter gives users the opportunity and freedom to post their personal thoughts and opinions, meaning that they can post almost anything they want despite restrictions on the platform. However, to combat inappropriate content on Twitter, the social media platform has created a series of public policy statements centred on combating crimes including racism, sexism and homophobia. It’s important your child knows about building a positive online reputation, as well as showing respect for others online and offline.

**FAKE NEWS**

The speed in which tweets can be shared on Twitter can be unbelievably fast, meaning that fake news can often be circulated on the platform very quickly. False news articles and posts can often be harmful and upsetting to young people and those associated with the false news. In addition to this, it’s very easy for people to quickly and unexpectedly retweet a tweet posted by your child, meaning there is no going back.

**FAKE PROFILES**

Fake Twitter accounts are made to impersonate a person, celebrity or public figure. As the accounts are not endorsed by the person they share, the other user will not know that they have been manipulated into supporting their beliefs. Blocking & Reporting:

If a particular account is causing your child trouble on Twitter, whether it’s cyberbullying or posting content, you can simply block and report them. Blocking them will help to prevent them from viewing, messaging or following your child, and vice versa. Reporting an account will alert Twitter to investigate the profile.

**SENSITIVE CONTENT**

By default, if Twitter has found a tweet that may contain sensitive content, Twitter will hide the content in the news feed from users who have set their preferences to ‘sensitive’. It is important your child knows about this feature off in the settings and easily moderate the videos your child watches before they see them.

**MUTED HASHTAGS & PHRASES**

Within the account settings, you have the ability to block certain trends, hashtags or phrases from your child’s timeline or notifications (e.g. swear words, inappropriate phrases, emojis, etc.).

**MEMES NORMALISING RACISM, SEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA**

Twitter is a platform for sharing Internet memes, helping to make concepts or ideas go viral across the Internet. However, despite most memes being innocent and harmless, some often include sexist, racist or homophobic messages. Although they are typically sent as a joke, this type of content is contributing to the normalisation of topics including racism, sexism and homophobia.

**TWITTER BLOCKING & REPORTING**

Twitter allows users to block anyone who they do not want to interact with directly. This can include blocking accounts that they do not necessarily want to follow, but feel that they might feel the need to replicate at home or amongst their peers. Additionally, there are also a number of complaints against fake profiles on the platform that can easily be found and viewed without restrictions.

**TWEET TROUBLE & THE LAW**

From 2016, the CPS were able to exercise new laws that could see those who create ‘derogatory hashtags’ or post “pornographic photographs” jailed. They also appear in an increased number of public policy statements centred on combating crimes including racism, sexism and homophobia. It’s important your child knows about building a positive online reputation, as well as showing respect for others online and offline.

**HIJACKED HASHTAGS**

One of the most commonly used aspects of Twitter is the hashtag (#). These allow users to easily search for specific trends, topics or subjects. However, due to the astronomical number of Twitter users, many hashtags can have different intentions. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag, while others might know hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn’t be exposed to. This is common with ‘trending’ tweets, as people know that their tweet will be seen by a greater number of people.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

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**TURN OFF VIDEO AUTOPLAY**

‘Autoplay’ is a feature that automatically starts playing a new video whenever you are on the platform, and it is commonly exploited by extremist groups to help promote violence, radicalise and recruit people to support their cause. These groups cleverly use the feature off in the settings and easily moderate the videos your child watches before they see them.

**CONVERSATION & MONITORING**

We always promote that you have regular open conversation with your child about their online activity, ensuring that they understand the dangers of the online world, such as fake news and online bullying. Only do people you should not be trusting as sources of information and what your child can do to prevent them.

**TWITTER LISTS**

Twitter lists allow users to combine other accounts and hashtags in one stream. You can combine topics related to a particular activity and build a list. This can be a great way to segment followers based on common topics and interests.

**WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TWITTER**

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