

# Online Safety Newsletter – March 2026

## Virtual Private Networks

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) connects a device through servers in another country. This allows it to get around Wi-Fi restrictions, access blocked or restricted websites and bypass parental controls. It may also mean that their browsing history is hidden.

Proton, Windscribe and TunnelBear are popular free VPNs to look out for if you are concerned.

The NSPCC provides a helpful overview of VPNs, plus top tips and conversation starters here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/vpns-andonline-safety/>

## Android Phones (Google)

Google provides parental controls through the Family Link app.

Parents can:

- Set screen time limits and bedtime schedules.
- Approve or block app downloads from Google Play.
- See which apps their child is using.
- Track device location.
- Remotely lock the device when needed.



Family Link also allows parents to manage their child's Google account and privacy settings.

## Important update - Chatbuddy



We would like to make parents and carers aware of a website called Chat Buddy, which is advertised as a free chat room for teenagers.

Although the platform is marketed at teens, the chat room is anonymous and does not require users to enter their details or confirm their age. This means there is no guarantee that young people are only communicating with other teenagers, and they could potentially be chatting with adults.

We encourage parents and carers to be aware of this site and to continue monitoring their child's online activity where possible.