ONLINE SAFETY ADVICE FOR PARENTS

An app called Sarahah was banned from Google and Apple app stores last year due to accusations that it was facilitating bullying, however it has now been re-added to the Google Play store as of last week. Other popular anonymous messaging apps that are currently being used by thousands of users include AskFM, Curious Cat, Tellonym, Sayat.me and Flizle.

Know the risks with anonymous messaging apps:
Many of these apps do not require users to register to submit comments

Most of these platforms require users to be 18 or over, however some allow users as young as 13 and there is no age verification preventing younger people from registering or using the platform.

Users may behave differently when they are anonymous, and there is a huge risk of bullying and an exposure to inappropriate comments.

Anonymous chat apps often have a poor moderation and reporting processes, and these platforms will only reveal information about who sent an anonymous message if required to do so by law enforcement.

Tellonym and sharing links across social media:

There is a trend on Instagram and Twitter for users of anonymous messaging apps to share a link to their Tellonym or Sarahah profile which allows people to submit anonymous messages and questions. Users should be aware that if they share their Tellonym or Sarahah link on their bio on Instagram, anybody can submit comments as all bios are public, even if their account is set to private.

Top tips:

Young people should be aware of these risks before using these platforms, and, if they are posting anonymously, they should consider the impact of sending unkind messages.

Users sending abusive or inappropriate comments can be blocked even if they are anonymous, although young people should be aware that this may be bypassed by using another device.

If a young person is receiving bullying or inappropriate messages on one of these platforms, they should block the user and make a report to the platform.

Follow our TEAM tips to help keep your child safe online when playing online games:

- **Talk to your child regularly** about what they're doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen. You can use our conversation starters to support you when starting these conversations.
- **Explore** your child's online activities together. Understand why they like playing certain games and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.
- **Agree** your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games. You can use our Family Agreement template to help you get started.
- **Manage** your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe. If you need support doing this, you can visit an O2 Guru in any O2 store or call the O2 NSPCC Advice Line on 0808 800 5002.

The resources listed above can be found on the NSPCC Website