

# Welcome to the May 2022 Scomis Online Safety Newsletter for Parents

## What do you know about Virtual Reality?

### What is Virtual Reality?

Virtual Reality (VR) is the description given to a three-dimensional, computer generated environment (often online game) which can take the user/player anywhere using special goggles (VR Headsets) which are placed over the eyes, fully immersing the user in the 'virtual environment' allowing exploration and interaction.

Extra interaction with the virtual environment can be further enhanced with the use of hand controllers and/or gloves with sensors.

VR enables the user to learn about different places, ideas and scenarios by experiencing them as if the user were actually there.

### The 4 main characteristics of VR:

**Believable:** What you see and hear makes you feel that you are actually there

**Fully immersive:** What you see changes as it would in real life as you move your head around with the VR headset on.

**Computer-generated:** Complex 3D computer graphics are created in the VR world that change in real time as the user moves their head.

**Interactive:** The user will be able to interact with different objects in the scene, pressing a button or opening a door.

### Potential Risks:

Parents/carers may not be able to see or hear what their child is experiencing when participating in online games wearing VR headsets and need to be aware of the potential risks.

### Review Smartsocial's latest video:

[Virtual Reality Safety Guide for Parents](#) and discover:

- Common forms of VR
- Examples of VR dangers
- Tips to keep children safe



## Have you heard the term - Child Influencer?

The Digital Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee has recently published a report which highlights the risks online influencer culture poses to children.

### Findings include:

- *posting content about children online can affect their privacy and present security risks;*
- *child influencers can be at risk of exploitation;*

### Recommendations include:

- *support for parents and schools in developing young people's media literacy;*
- *new legislation that protects child influencers.*

Read the summary report:

[Influencers: lights, camera, inaction](#)

## BeReal

### CommonSense Media's review:

**Parents need to know that BeReal is a social media app for iOS and Android devices.**

BeReal allows children to:

- post a photo once a day that will be shared with friends they are linked to
- respond to posts by using selfies they have taken that show different expressions
- view photos from other users they do not know who have shared them in a public feed and **friend** those users
- use the app to send them notifications to be able to download and use it

**NB. Recommended Age: 13+**

**Warning - Posts do not appear to be screened, so there may be a chance content that is not child-friendly could be shared.**

Read [CommonSense Media's](#) review in full [here](#) including more information on:

- What BeReal is all about
- Whether BeReal is any good
- Talking to your child about using BeReal



You can find further advice and tips for parents/carers at: [Parentzone's website](#) - Top articles about digital parenting [InternetMatters website](#) - Get a personalised online safety toolkit [here](#). Use the toolkit to:

- Obtain age-specific advice to support your children online
- Learn about popular apps and platforms your children use
- Get information about how to deal with any online safety concerns

Review the video:

[To get tailored online](#)



## Reminder - Support for Grandparents!

**The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has published a resource to support grandparents with online safety. The guidance includes:**

- how to support your grandchild in using the internet safely and responsibly
- how to respond if something goes wrong

Be in the know!. Subscribe to the [UK Safer Internet Centre's](#) newsletter:

## Where to get help

Visit the [UK Safer Internet Centre's](#) website to access details and links for a number of organisations that can help with:

- Reporting on Social Media
  - Reporting Criminal Content Online
- and much more!

## Need Help in the holidays?

Remember **FREE** advice is just a phone call away from the O<sub>2</sub> and NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5002  
Childline: 0800 1111