



# Orchard Community Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Fiona Shields  
[fshields@orchard.leics.sch.uk](mailto:fshields@orchard.leics.sch.uk)

Deputy Headteacher: Mr John Patching

Grange Drive  
Castle Donington  
Derbyshire  
DE74 2QU  
Telephone: 01332 810078  
[school@orchard.leics.sch.uk](mailto:school@orchard.leics.sch.uk)

[www.orchardprimary.org](http://www.orchardprimary.org)  
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## Helpful Hints: How children can stay connected during lockdown

In these uncertain times, children are going to miss the social aspects of school, clubs and extra-curricular activities more than anything. We've had a few requests from parents regarding ideas to enable their children to stay in touch with their friends. With this in mind, I have put together some ideas that you could use to keep your children connected.

**'Play' to help younger children who are missing their friends** - The internet has provided many ways for children to interact remotely, and maintain those friendships but for younger children especially, nothing can replace the joy of playing together in person. Think about what your children enjoy doing with their friends then switch off from parent mode, even just for a little while, and play with your children as their peers would: get messy, run around, play games, have quiet time and watch a film, build on their creative ideas, get the lego out ...

**Phone/Video Calls** - Seeing a familiar face via Facetime will do wonders for a child's wellbeing at this crazy time.

**Send Daily Emails** - Become virtual "pen pals" with both friends and family by sending emails each day letting them know what you have been up to.

**Video Conferencing, Web Conferencing, Webinars** - You can download the Zoom app for free and set a "meeting time" for your child and invite their friends to join them. The free plan allows you to host video conferences of up to 40 minutes and up to 100 participants. This will need to be set up by parents. Children can have a virtual party, play games (<https://www.weareteachers.com/20-fun-zoom-games-for-kids/>) host a quiz, run a book club... they can even complete their remote learning alongside each other via Zoom, so that they can chat through ideas etc.

However, Skype, Zoom or Google Hangouts can be a bit 'business-like' for fun loving kids! Consider other ways for children to connect socially, like Google Duo on Android, FaceTime on the iPhone or apps like Caribu and Popjam. These feel more personal and offer fun features like 3D Masks and shared drawing boards.

**Game Apps** - There are chess games and battleships, for example, which you can download from the app store. These can also be downloaded to tablets and on some, invites can be sent to friends.

**Online Gaming** - The likes of Rugby20 or FIFA when set up with the correct parental controls, offer party functions. If all playing online at the same time children can join a party and chat with their friends as they game together. Games such as Roblox and Minecraft also bring children together through play. Those with PlayStation/Xbox etc. can connect socially with parents controls in place - lots of games enable them to chat whilst playing.

**Get social** - Letting your child use social media is a big step for any parent. Take small steps by creating a profile for your child on one of the following:

**Yoursphere (age 9+)** – a free online social network that is centred around safe and fun rewards-based interactive content and activities for children and young people up to the age of 18. It has features dedicated at guarding youth privacy and safety, such as its approach to verifying identities, requiring parental consent, performing predator checks as well as using technology and human oversight to monitor site activity.



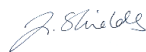
**KidzWorld (age 9+)** – Kidzworld is a social community and Safe Kids Website where you can express your free-spirited self. Kids chat, play games, create a profile or get help with school work. Read game reviews, movie news, celebrity gossip and more.

**Family Connections** – You could consider connecting with other families. There are lots of free online escape room activities, take it in turn to host bingo or a quiz night ...

**Netflix** - Netflix allows you to watch the same movie as friends at the same time – children could connect on zoom or similar to chat whilst it is on?

**Leave a message** – Your child could leave a message or picture in the window for friends to see whilst they are taking their daily exercise with family members, or they could post a card through their friend’s post box (again, whilst on a daily walk). Sometimes the simplest ideas can mean the most.

Kind Regards



Fiona Shields - Headteacher

