

Schools keep bubbles of children connected using gated social media platform

Primary schools across England are keeping bubbles, classes and year groups connected using a social media platform that can be used in school and at home.

Over 1,300 schools are now using the tool in England, which looks and works in a similar way to popular social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but is overseen by teachers and can only be accessed by pupils signed up by the school.

Children and staff at schools in England are currently working in separate bubbles. Using the platform, named Natterhub, teachers have set up online groups so that pupils in different bubbles can still interact. Whole classes, year groups and even entire schools can be included in a group with their own newsfeed, allowing children to stay connected in a safe online space.

Natterhub can be used to share photos, videos and work, write posts and comment on shared content. Children can access it at home or in class on a desktop, laptop or tablet, with teachers able to set when the platform is live.



Dorchester Primary School in Hull has 14 teachers and 300 pupils signed up.

Clare Powell, a Year 3 teacher at Dorchester Primary, said: "Each class or year group has its own hub so we know they are only interacting with their peers.

"Using technology safely is so important to us as a school and Natterhub allows us to teach the children in an engaging and fun way and on a social media platform that is safe."

Clare and other teachers across the UK have also been using the platform to teach their class and stay connected with them when they themselves have had to return home and isolate.

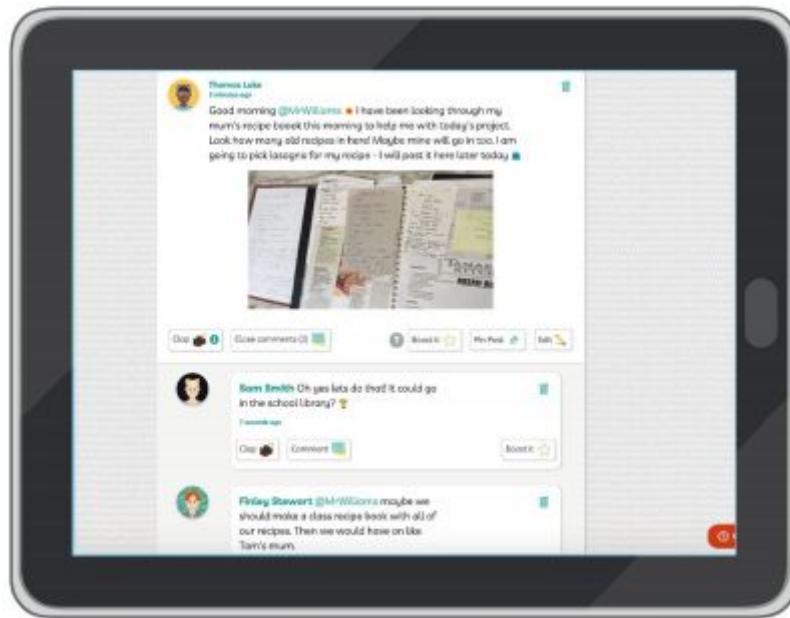
Natterhub was created to provide a secure online space for children to interact but also as a tool to teach children about staying safe whilst using the internet and digital literacy. There are lessons and quizzes on the platform and teachers can also set challenges and work to be completed either at home or in class.

St Faith's Church of England school in Lincoln has 10 teachers and 140 pupils signed up and is using the platform to help their pupils learn how to use social media safely.

Gemma Wallis, a computing lead at the school, said: "It provides children with a safe place to try out social media and practise their 'netiquette skills', with the support of the adults in school. I'm reassured that the children will be extrinsically taught how to navigate online in a safe environment that looks and feels like social media."

Natterhub was created by parents Manjit Sareen and Caroline Allams after they recognised the dangers faced by their young children as they spent time online. The lessons and tools on Natterhub all support the new curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which includes online safety and digital literacy, and has been compulsory in schools since September 2020.

Manjit Sareen, CEO of Natterhub, said: "We are so pleased that the platform has been a useful way for children to keep connected at this time. It was designed to support children to learn digital skills, but during the current pandemic the social element of Natterhub has really come to the fore.



"It has been wonderful to hear how schools and pupils have been using the platform in a whole range of different ways. Children have shared dance routines for keeping fit, art projects, videos of changing seasons in the garden and birthday announcements when their parties needed cancelling. We know that children have missed their friends more than anything else during lockdown and we were so happy to know that they were able to make use of Natterhub to maintain mental wellbeing, whilst also developing crucial digital literacy skills."

For more information please visit www.natterhub.co.uk

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For more information please contact media@twinkl.co.uk or call 0114 360 0225

About Natterhub:

- Natterhub was founded by Caroline Allams and Manjit Sareen with the aim to prepare all children to thrive online. The idea to create the platform first came to the duo in 2017. In the years following they have conducted extensive research with teachers, parents and children.
- Natterhub joined TwinklHive in 2019 to support the continued development of the Natterhub platform.
- Online safety is set to become a compulsory subject of the National Curriculum in September 2020.
- Natterhub was set to launch in May, to be used in schools in time for the new compulsory RSE curriculum. In light of the current situation, alterations have been made to make it ideal for home-use and available for free to support teachers, parents and carers during the current school closures.
- Natterhub has been subscribed by over 1500 users in over 35 countries in the first three months of launch.
- More information can be found at natterhub.com