

Teachers offered safe social media platform for their class as children spend more time online at home

A safe and educational social media platform has been launched by two parents, as children spend more time at home online amidst school closures.

The interactive platform, Natterhub, has been created for teachers to share with their pupils and use in the classroom and at home.

Created for children aged 5 to 11, Natterhub enables teachers to create an online community for their pupils and empowers them with a complete scheme of work to develop children's understanding of the internet. This includes online safety and media literacy lessons for Years 1 to 6 that includes fun, interactive and engaging content.

As an interactive platform, Natterhub uses a 'role-modelling' technique, which teaches by example as children learn through imitation. It looks and feels like a real social media site but helps children learn appropriate behaviour and how to safely navigate the online world in an environment that is safe, secure, and overseen by the teacher.

Children also have the opportunity to apply the knowledge they are acquiring through the lessons as they can communicate with their peers online and share pictures, posts and comments with their class.

Founders of Natterhub, Manjit Sareen and Caroline Allams, were planning to launch the product to be used in schools in time for the new compulsory PSHE/RSE curriculum in September. They have now made alterations to make it ideal for home-use and available for free to support teachers, parents and carers during the current school closures.

natterhub
powered by
The logo for twinkl hive, featuring the word 'twinkl' in its signature blue font with a red star above the 'i', followed by 'hive' in a smaller, rounded font.

"As children are at home, they are inevitably spending more time online", explained Manjit Sareen, Co-Founder and CEO of Natterhub and a parent of two

young boys, "This isn't necessarily a bad thing as the internet offers valuable learning opportunities as well as entertainment.

"But with this, there are also increased risks for children, especially for those who do not have the necessary guidance and education as they may be vulnerable to inappropriate information or cyberbullying. Sadly, we do expect to see an increase in the number of children being targeted online during this time."

The start-up also recently conducted a survey about the amount of time children are spending online during the school closures. When asked, out of 765 parents, a third revealed their children were spending 3-4 hours online a day, whilst 55% said their children were spending 1-2 hours on the internet. Out of everyone surveyed, 26 parents said their children were spending over 7 hours online a day.

Caroline Allams, Co-Founder and CCO of Natterhub, and a former Assistant Headteacher said: "We know that the internet is a really vital tool for everyone at the moment and a way for children to stay connected to the world and each other. However, the results of this survey do illustrate just how much time children are spending online and we need to be mindful of this.



"We don't want people to be afraid to use the internet, but we do want them to have a safe space to learn so that they can thrive online. It is not enough for children just to be safe, they need to know how to navigate their online lives and be aware, savvy, and sceptical about what they read."

Schools and teachers can visit natterhub.com and sign up for a free account. They will then be guided to set up log-ins for parents and pupils. If parents would like their child's teacher or school to sign-up they can recommend them by visiting www.natterhub.com/refer. To ensure security, teachers need to enable the hub to be active for login and pupils have a daily allowance of time to use Natterhub to avoid them spending too much time on screen. No

payment details are taken at any point and the hub is open for teachers, parents and children to use at any time.

Natterhub was the first start-up company to join TwinklHive, a business accelerator, at the end of last year.

The accelerator was created by the global publisher Twinkl and offers start-ups with a customisable cash investment, access to services and residency and mentorship to help them break into and succeed within the EdTech sector.

By providing support, TwinklHive brings together emerging companies set to transform areas of education and make a difference to the lives of teachers and pupils.

For more information about Natterhub, please visit natterhub.com

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