

# Safety in the Metaverse



## What parents need to know to keep children safe in the metaverse

### What is the Metaverse?

The metaverse is an evolving version of the online world that strives to be a true augmentation of human reality, where users can interact with each other through digital avatars. It is the Internet as we know it, but with the addition of a fully immersive experience that allows users to go from a concert to a mall, buy clothing, or even rent real estate.

### How kids use and benefit from the metaverse

The metaverse offers users the chance to interact with each other in immersive environments that extend beyond traditional online experiences. When used with the correct education and safety measures, the metaverse can:

- Provide opportunities for self-expression and global discourse that mirrors in-person communication without the restrictions of geographic boundaries.
- Increase interest in STEM/STEAM with metaverse integration into classroom settings.
- Propel and advance society through technological innovation.
- Present deep learning potential for children to help them better understand the world around them.
- Improve social skills, social intelligence and creativity.

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## **What are the risks?**

The metaverse presents unprecedented opportunities and rewards, but also poses the same potential for risk as any other virtual space. These richer and more realistic online experiences could mean that certain risks feel more pervasive and personal in the metaverse.

- Young people may feel more overwhelmed or uncomfortable if they face negative interactions in these new environments.
- As with prior iterations of websites, games, and social platforms, the evolution of the metaverse may still invite toxic behaviors such as bullying, catfishing, or scams by bad actors.
- In a virtual world where users create avatars that are digital representations of themselves, there may be potential for harmful or discriminatory comments about how they look, act, or speak.
- Virtual reality plays a big role in the metaverse with the introduction of [VR headsets](#). Replicating face-to-face experiences in virtual worlds may cause concern for recreating the same unwanted interactions that have real-life consequences on users' well-being.
- As with all new digital environments, there can be a learning curve in regards to security, privacy, and data collection that can have new implications for users.

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## **Keeping your family safe in the metaverse**

The following tips can help you take steps to establish a positive experience in the metaverse:

- Parents should become informed about the metaverse. While it may not be possible to know everything, having a general understanding of the features and content kids will be interacting with is important.
- Provide kids with guidance regarding appropriate behavior when interacting with others online.
- Talk with kids openly; ask questions about what they're up to and focus on discussions around safety, empathy, and citizenship.
- Routinely review settings and try out new apps and device features alongside kids, taking an interest in their digital lives.
- Teach kids how to use in-platform safety features such as blocking or reporting when someone makes them uncomfortable.
- When needed, set up parental controls and limit certain features.
- Regularly update software and security features so they're current and most effective.
- Check settings and terms of service to determine how much data or personal information is being collected.

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## **Using VR headsets**

VR Headset Tips:

- Familiarize yourself with the built-in content management settings that are available to you via headset menus or even external companion apps for desktop or mobile devices.
- Set it, but don't forget it! Make sure to do routine checkups to ensure the parental control settings are up to date and still align with your household's safety standards.
- Sit down with your kids as you set up these controls, so there is a mutual understanding of what expectations are for digital etiquette in these virtual worlds. Ask them their input on what some rules and settings should be.