ONLINE SAFETY NEWS

Spring 2023

New advice from the NSPCC

Many children enjoy playing online games and having a social media presence. As children get older this often involves speaking with others online and with this comes the potential risk of grooming and exploitation.

Speaking to your child from a young age about who they are talking to online and helping them recognise when a conversation may be putting them at risk can help to keep them safe from abuse. The NSPCC has published **new advice** on how to start age-appropriate conversations with your child on this challenging topic. The advice includes how to:

- Help your child recognise unhealthy online chat
- Have age-appropriate conversations about sexual abuse
- Explore the different communication features online
- Review safety settings

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ONLINE ABUSE:

Help children stay safe on chat apps.

The NSPCC have published safety guides on chat apps. Chat apps allow users to send messages, videos, photographs and documents to individuals or groups of people. Personal safety settings should always be used to help ensure children only receive messages from people they know and trust and messages from strangers are automatically blocked. Reassuring children they can talk with you if they feel they may have had a risky conversation is always helpful.

Most chat apps do have safety settings, if this is not the case then such platforms are not to be recommended for children.

If you are worried about something your child may have experienced online, you can contact the NSPCC helpline for free support and advice. Call 0800 800 5000 or **contact NSPCC online**.

ONLINE GROOMING

Grooming is when a person builds a trusted relationship with a child or young person with the intent of tricking or pressuring them into giving something they want from the child. Groomers often want something sexual from a young person. Groomers may use tactics such as flattery or blackmail to get nude images, videos or have sexual conversations with young people. This grooming process can take place over a short or long period of time.

Anyone under 18 who has an explicit or nude image of themselves posted online can anonymously and confidentially **click here to make a report** to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). The IWF can then contact the website where the image has been posted to try to get the image removed.

Nobody should blackmail or pressure anyone into doing something sexual online. If someone is doing this to your child you or they can also **make a report to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) here**.

Young people can also speak to a Childline counsellor here.

The Childline website has **further advice** for parents/carers including:

- the signs of grooming
- how to tell if someone is a groomer
- what to do if you think a child is being groomed.

GAMING COMMUNITIES

Gaming communities are platforms which allow gaming fans to meet, chat, watch top gamers in action via live streaming, access forum discussions and keep in touch with others who have similar gaming interests.

Reddit and Discord are two popular sites associated with social gaming communities. Both these sites have an age rating of 13+.

Parent zone has put together **a guide, here,** to help families understand the benefits and risks of gaming communities for children and offer suggestions of how parents can help support safety on such sites.

Read the Parentzone guide to Reddit >

Read the Parentzone guide to Discord >

LIVE STREAMING

In a recent survey carried out by Ofcom it was reported that six in ten children aged 3-17 (57%) used live streaming platforms to watch online content. A much lower proportion of children streamed their own videos in real time for others to watch (15%). The research found that the platforms used most to watch live streams were YouTube and TikTok.

(Data source: Ofcom Children and Parent: media use and attitudes report 2022) The NSPCC has published guidance to help parents/carers understand some of the risks associated with both live streaming and watching live stream channels. Once content has been livestreamed, there is the risk that videos are saved and re shared without permission. Its possible for strangers to make contact with a child about their livestreamed content and start a grooming process.

Click here for guidance that gives an overview of some of the features that help reduce risk for children >

ASKING THE AWKWARD

'TALK LITTLE. TALK OFTEN. ASK THE AWKWARD' (CEOP)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), has put together guidance on 'Asking The Awkward', this includes talking to teenagers about their social or romantic online lives. For many young people, and adults, the online world is an essential component in starting, continuing and ending a relationship!

There are short films here that you can watch with your child to help start conversations >

CEOP's introduction to Asking The Awkward will help you to prepare for regular conversations with your child about online relationships and related topics. It also offers advice on how to keep conversations positive and what to do if your child tells you something that worries you.

Access the guidance here >

NEW RESOURCE: THRIVE ONLINE – SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND

This new resource is for schools and parent/carers to help support young people with SEND, aged 11 and over, to thrive online.

"These resources are designed to empower young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to build happy and healthy online relationships."

The resources for parents and carers, here, are designed to help start conversations and help support your child around the topics of:

- online pornography
- healthy online relationships
- digital wellbeing
- nudes

The resources contain key information and conversations starters and videos to help answer frequently asked questions from parents and cares.

Questions such as:

- How do I explain to my child what a healthy relationship is?
- My child trusts everyone online, what can I do?
- My child is secretive about who they talk to online, what can I do?

This newsletter has been produced based on information provided through NSPCC https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ and CEOP https://www.ceop.police.uk/ Safety-Centre/ therefore is as reliable as I can provide as of the date of the publication of this newsletter: January 2023.

If we can support you, your family or children with any issues relating to points raised in this newsletter or for any other concerns please do contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Caroline.belchem@ispschools.org.uk

Amelia.stoner@ispschools.org.uk

Beverley.curtis@ispschools.org.uk