polaris

Safer Internet Day
Tuesday 7th February 2023

Tuesday 7th February 2023 is Safer Internet Day. This short guide has been put together to share some statistics, resources and information from the external landscape. Safer Internet Day is a great day to have conversations about online safety and raise awareness of the subject, however it is important to note that discussions should be **ongoing** and not just on Safer Internet Day

According to Ofcom's Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022:

Using video-sharing platforms (VSPs) such as YouTube or TikTok was the most popular online activity among children aged 3-17 (95%)

More than a third (36%) of children aged 8-17 said they had seen something *'worrying or nasty'* online in the past 12 months

More than a third of 8-17s who gamed online played with people they didn't know (36%)

Thank you to the children at ISP School Battle who told us about their internet use. They told us the following:

- They use the internet for YouTube, Facebook, playing games and watching cartoons
- They would speak to their teachers, parents or family if there was something online concerning them
- Childline could also help
- When asked what sites are useful online one child shared that a website that can help for food shopping is... Tesco!

There are times where children and young people may come across harmful content online. This can include (but is not limited to): online abuse; self-harm or suicide content; threats; impersonation and bullying/harassment. There are sites that can help deal with this kind of content. They include:

CEOP – This is a service where you can make a report if you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you/child or young person online. The website can be accessed here.

Report Harmful Content – This service can help you to report harmful content online by providing up to date information on community standards and direct links to the correct reporting facilities across multiple platforms. The website can be accessed here.

DID YOU KNOW?
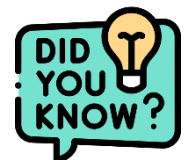
The UK Safer Internet Centre have a Professional Online Safety Hotline (POSH) that can be reached on **0344 381 4772**. The service offers advice and guidance to professionals on online safety issues.

Online Safety Bill

Since the Online Safety Bill was first introduced in 2022 it has been repeatedly altered during its passage through Parliament causing delays and there has been some controversy with some people arguing that it does not go far enough whilst others are worried about the impact it will have on free speech.

The government claims that the Online Safety Bill will help deliver their commitment of making the UK the safest place in the world to be online. New laws are being proposed to protect children from online dangers including ensuring that platforms prevent access to material that is harmful for children, easier ways to report abuse and a **duty** to report any child sexual exploitation or abuse concerns to the National Crime Agency

There are currently calls for more changes to be made including giving Ofcom the powers to prosecute social media bosses who breach child safety rules.

The situation is still evolving and we encourage you to spend some time doing some research on what the proposed changes involve. There are lots of useful YouTube videos that can be found by simply searching '*Online Safety Bill'.*

Fake news is false information that is shared under the guise of news in order to mislead or deceive others. There has been a lot of attention to fake news over the last few years and there is an increased risk that vulnerable children and young people may believe what they read online. Some top tips to avoid fake news:

- Do your own research
- Don't share if you're not sure
- Talk to children regularly about what they see online

BBC Bitesize have an interactive quiz where you can see whether you can spot the signs of fake news. It can be accessed here.

The rise of social media influencers

By now, it is likely that you have heard of Andrew Tate, an online social media influencer who has become notorious for his misogynist and extremist views. Andrew Tate offers a paid subscription service that includes education and coaching on making money online. It is believed that vulnerable people are signing up to this. It is important not to draw attention to Andrew Tate if a child/young person hasn't heard about him however you should ensure that you are having generic conversations about what they are seeing online and challenging any opinions and presenting alternative views if required.

Andrew Tate is not the only influencer online who will hold controversial views and spread fake news therefore, it is important you remain vigilant about any '*influencers*' children are following on social media.

There are often posts online including on Facebook that go viral and warn others about various games, challenges and risks online. **Whilst it is important to be aware of these, it is important not to panic and to learn how to spot** *fake news.*

An important example of this is the Momo challenge hoax that took place in 2018 where it was reported that children and adolescents were being enticed by a user named Momo to perform a series of dangerous tasks including violent attacks, self-harm, harming others, and suicide. However, after extensive research the NSPCC, the Samaritans, and the UK Safer Internet Centre declared the Momo Challenge a hoax and no evidence was ever found that it existed.

In November 2017, Molly Russell sadly took her own life after viewing extensive amounts of material related to suicide, depression, anxiety and self-harm on platforms including Instagram and Pinterest. An inquest found social media content contributed *"more than minimally"* to her death.

The BBC have published a short 15 minute documentary called *"Molly Russell: Did her death change social media?"* The programme can be accessed here.

After Olly Stephens was murdered, his mum and dad became aware of the violent and disturbing world their son had been exposed to through his phone. BBC Panorama, investigated the role social media played in his death and how a 13-year-old's social media accounts were recommending violent videos and knives for sale.

The 30 minute documentary *"A social media murder: Olly's Story"* can be accessed here.

Knowsley City Learning Centres have provided a comprehensive guide on setting up parental controls on a range of different sites. Parental controls can help to protect children from seeing something that they shouldn't - although it is important to emphasise that no system is effective all of the time so it is important to engage with children and talk to them about their online life regularly. The guide can be accessed here.

Safer Internet Day 2023 | Tuesday 7 February
Together for a better internet
www.saferinternetday.org

For more information on online safety including resources, toolkits and podcasts please see the Safeguarding Hub on the Exchange which can be accessed on the home page through the *'quick links'* section.

In addition, as part of the refreshed L&D offer, there is due to be a new online safety course launched over the next few months which we encourage you to book on when available.