SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

We would like to thank everyone for their very positive feedback on our first issue of our Safeguarding Newsletter.

We really do hope you found it useful.

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With the summer holidays approaching we thought we would give you some guidance on Online Safety to keep your children and you safe over this holiday period.

This issue will look at different websites and apps that children are using that you may never have heard of before.

It will offer guidance on how you can help your children to stay safe and this means by talking to your children……

Talk about their online world

We talk to children about crossing the road, bullying and speaking to strangers. But what about staying safe in the digital world?

Having regular conversations about what your child is doing online - just like you would their day at school - is the best way to keep them safe.

You'll be able to spot any problems, encourage them to come to you if they're worried and make sure they know what's ok to share online - and what's not.

3 tips to help start the conversation

1. Explore sites and apps together and talk about any concerns.

2. Ask your child if they know how to stay safe online.

3. Talk about personal information and what to share online.

CEOP

A National Crime Agency command

Child Exploitation and Online Protection

Has something happened online that has made you feel worried or unsafe?

Visit:

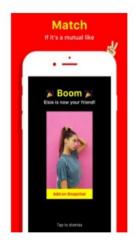*https://ceop.police.uk/ safety-centre/*

Stay Safe Online

Here is information on different apps that are easily accessible to children:

Yellow

Described as **'Tinder for Teens'**, the Yellow app allows users to make new friends using their Snapchat and Instagram accounts.

This is a mobile phone app that is free to download. To create as profile on Yellow you have to enter Snapchat username, first name, date of birth and gender. Users can then upload a profile picture together with a further 5 photos.

Yellow uses location technology to find other users nearby, therefore anyone wishing to sign up must enable their location on their device. This brings obvious risks for young people sharing their location online. The app makes it easy for young people to connect with people they don't know on Snapchat and allows people to send each other photos and videos that disappear within a few seconds.

Age Restrictions
Users of Yellow must be 13+ to sign-up for the app. Users between the ages of 13-17 should get parental permission before signing up or creating an account. Users under 17 are only allowed to connect with users between 13-17. However, it's very easy to access the app using an incorrect date of birth.

We would recommend that parents exercise extreme caution with this app and consider whether that it's age appropriate for their child.

SimSimi

SimSimi is an artificial intelligence chatting robot also know as chatbot.

Chatbots are computer programmes that stimulate human conversations on the internet. The app is free to download onto a mobile phone and can be accessed via a desktop computer. It encourages users to continue conversation by using playful language, however much of the language on the app is offensive or contains sexual content. SimSimi is also anonymous, making it easy for users to leave hurtful comments about others.

How does it work?

Using artificial intelligence, users can begin a conversation with a chatbot. The chatbot can be asked anything and the chatbot will respond. The responses can range from a helpful reply to offensive content. There is an option to switch off 'bad words', this can be done using the app settings. The user can 'teach' the chatbot responses and replies. Users can input any text/phrases/response they wish, the chatbot may then use this as a response to other users if asked that particular question. This particular function is causing concern among schools and parents, with many young people being able to view anonymous responses about themselves when they type their name into the app.

SimiSimi can be fun to use, however as an anonymous app it can be used as a platform for bullying.

sayat.me & ask.fm?

These apps / websites allow users to leave 'honest and anonymous feedback' on others' profiles. It gives users a platform where their views can be published without any restrictions. These responses are generally kept private, but the receiver can choose to make them public.

It is very difficult to pin down the person who responds with an abusive post.

There are a couple of things that you need to consider from an online safety point is grooming and online bullying.

What is the Blue Whale online suicide game?

The Blue Whale suicide game is believed to be an online social media group which is encouraging people to kill themselves.

It's thought a group administrator assigns daily tasks to members, which they have to complete over 50 days.

The horrific tasks include self-harming, watching horror movies and waking up at unusual hours, but these gradually get more extreme.

On the 50th day, the controlling manipulators behind the game reportedly instruct the youngsters to commit suicide.

The NSPCC say children should remember not to follow the crowd and not feel pressured into doing anything that makes them feel unsafe.

Children can find it difficult to stand up to peer pressure but they must know it's perfectly okay to refuse to take part in crazes that make them feel unsafe or scared.

Parents should talk with their children and emphasise that they can make their own choices and discuss ways of how to say no.

Reassuring a child that they can still be accepted even if they don't go along with the crowd will help stop them doing something that could hurt them or make them uncomfortable"

STOP THE BLUE WHALE CHALLENGE

Musical.ly is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short music videos. There is some confusion over the minimum age users should be!!

Users can select songs, videos they wish to use or make their own video and select the music to go with it. They can then upload the video to their musical.ly profile, together with other profiles they may have.

Users may be exposed to bad language and content of a sexual nature. Users can leave comments on others' videos, which leave children open to online bullying and negative comments. However, the app does promote positive comments and asking users to say 'something nice'

Reporting.....

All of the apps / websites that have been mentioned, together with other social media platforms all have reporting features within their settings.

We recommend that you get to know the apps/websites your children are using.

Always check the privacy settings.

Sexting—What parents need to know….

What is 'Sexting'?

'sexting' is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet. It can include sexual chat or requests for pictures / images of a sexual nature.

Is it illegal?

This depends on what the image is or what the chat involved and who it is sent between. However, it is a crime to possess, take, make, distribute or show anyone an indecent or abuse image of a child or young person under 18 years of age.

Always remember that, while the age of consent is 16, the relevant age in relation to indecent images is 18.

What if a child (under 18 years of age) takes a sexually explicit image of themselves?

That child has committed an offence by making and possessing that image. If that child then sends the image to another person then the child has committed a further offence of distributing the image and the person who receives the image will also be liable for an offence of possessing the image. **In these cases you should contact local police on 101 for advice and guidance.**

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances.

If it's sexually explicit text/chat between children:

There may still be a possible offence but in these cases the detail of the text/chat should be considered. General

sexual references would not necessarily constitute an offence but text/chat that incites a child to engage in sexual activity or to make or distribute sexual images of themselves or another child should be reported to local police for further guidance. Do not delete or alter any material.

Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances. In particular any age difference between the children should be considered.

If you need any further information or guidance:

Anyone looking for advice about sexting or keeping children safe online, or concerned about the safety and welfare of a child, can contact the

NSPCC

HELPLINE

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE

101

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999