SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

ONLINE SAFETY: AGE APPROPRIATE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is one of the most popular aspects of the internet, and with the amount of apps available for download increasing constantly, keeping young people safe online has never been more important.

But what exactly do we need to know about the age restrictions and safety on these apps in terms of internet safety? We answer some of your most frequently asked questions below:

Why are a lot of social media apps 13+?

As you can see from the above infographic, many social media apps have an age rating of 13+. This relates to data processing policies that social media companies need to adhere to. Under the COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) Law, social media companies are prohibited from collecting and storing any personal information about any persons under the age of 13, unless they have permission from their Parents/Carers.

13+: Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Kik, YouNow, Yubo, House Party, Monkey
16+: WhatsApp
17+: Sarahah, YOLO
18+: MeetMe, LiveMe

What age do you recommend to begin social networking?

This is going to be different for everyone. However, if the age rating were to do with content, it may be higher. For example, while YouNow's terms state that any user needs to be over the age of 13, some of the content that is being generated on that platform would not be appropriate for someone under the age of 18.

It's always a good idea to gather as much information as possible before proceeding to download any social media app.

We'd recommend checking out *Common Sense Media.* They give an overview of the app and also a rating based on opinions from experts, Parents/Carers and children and young people too.

What about privacy settings?

Privacy settings certainly allow for a greater sense of security when using social media apps. It is advised that these are used collaboratively with children and young people, and are set up at the same time as downloading the app.

Certain apps have different content available depending on your age. For example, if you are over 13, but under 18, you may be restricted as to what content you can see on the platform. However, it is possible to falsify your age and receive access to the platform in it's entirety, so check in regularly to see what your young person is seeing on the apps they may be using.

Internet Matters have excellent online safety guides available for Parents/Carers on popular apps, games and devices.

What if they see something upsetting?

It is now strongly advised that young people develop digital resilience to help them stay safe online. Training young people in internet safety and resilience online is now more important than ever before. Discuss the importance of critical thinking online, speaking up if they ever see something that they find upsetting or worrying, and online conduct regularly.

Thinkuknow (Powered by CEOP), have excellent resources available to train young people in digital resilience.

A key part of keeping young people safe online is talking about their online experiences regularly, opening up a consistent, non-judgemental conversation goes a long way in providing a stronger level of online safety for young people, particularly on social media platforms.

It's Christmas Time!

A Parent's Guide to **Social Media**

A Parent's Guide to **Sharing Pictures**

A Parent's Guide to **Gaming**

A Parent's Guide to **Online Grooming**

scan the QR code with your phone's camera to see the guides on our website

A Parent's Guide to **Live Streaming**

A Parent's Guide to **Online Influencers**

A Parent's Guide to **Fake News**

A Parent's Guide to **Privacy Settings**

It's always best to be prepared

Many parents may be planning to give electronic gadgets to their children this festive period.

Our guide is designed to help parents take a realistic approach to help keep their children safe when using the internet, social media and playing online games.

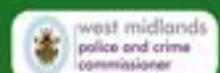Scan the QR code to find out more.

Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.

Parents please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

Skips Educational Email: info@skipsed.com Tel: +44 121 227 1941

Skips

www.skipssafetynet.org

Developed in partnership with

Home Office
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit

west midlands police and crime commissioner

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

What is Child-on-Child Abuse?

'Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.'
Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally harm others. It can happen to children of a similar age or stage of development and can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.

Child-on-child abuse can happen in a wide range of settings, including:

- at school
- at home
- in someone else's home
- in the community
- online

It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, child-on-child abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground, corridors and when children are walking home.

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element, for example:

- sexting
- online abuse
- coercion and exploitation
- peer-on-peer grooming
- threatening language delivered via online means
- the distribution of sexualised content and harassment

As children develop healthily, it is normal for them to display certain types of behaviour. It is important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if any behaviour has become harmful or abusive, and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe.

It is essential that all our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. Child-on-child abuse will never be accepted or dismissed as 'children being children'. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

If one child causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as child-on-child abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children do not generally require multi-agency intervention. However, it may be appropriate to regard a child's behaviour as abusive if:

- there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the children concerned; or

- the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or there are concerns about the intention of the alleged child. If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim or to exploit them, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

What are the indicators and signs that a child is being abused by their peers?

Indicators and signs that a child may be suffering from child-on-child abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse and can include:

- failing to attend school, disengaging from lessons, or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the
- standard ordinarily expected
- physical injuries
- experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing
- becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age
- abusive behaviour towards others

Abuse affects our children and their presenting behaviours in different ways and the list above is not exhaustive. Children who present with one or more of these signs are not necessarily victims of abuse and their behaviour will depend on their individual circumstances.

ALL staff are alert to behaviour that may cause concern and think about what the behaviour might signify. We actively encourage children to share with us any underlying reasons for their behaviour, and, where appropriate, to engage with their parents/carers so that the cause(s) of their behaviour can be investigated and understood with the appropriate support in place.

We recognise that any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to the strength of peer influence, especially during adolescence, and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children.

Which groups of students are most vulnerable to being abused by their peers?

Extra consideration should be given for pupils who may have additional vulnerabilities due to protected characteristics.

Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. Research suggests that:

- child-on-child abuse may affect boys differently from girls (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators). However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously;
- children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without;
- some children may be more likely to experience child-on-child abuse than others as a result of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs; and
- children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

What factors influence sexualised behaviour?

Many factors influence sexual behaviour, including:

- lack of sex and relationships information

- lack of privacy

- boredom, loneliness, anxiety, confusion or depression

- family/carer conflict or information and support needs

- lack of rules, appropriate consequences or boundaries

- emotional, physical or sexual abuse

- sexual exploitation and/or trafficking

- communication difficulties

- sexual excitement or curiosity

- attention or relationship needs

- gender issues

- copying the behaviour of other children and young people

- copying behaviours seen on the internet or TV

This is not an exhaustive list and we may need specialist support to clearly identify the reason for the behaviour and the correct intervention.

Dealing with unhealthy sexual behaviour at an early stage can help to prevent subsequent sexually harmful behaviours from developing.

Prevention

It is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of child-on-child abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.

Firstly, and most importantly, is recognition that child-on-child abuse can occur in any setting even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting children to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

We actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- educating Governors, the Senior Leadership Team, staff, and volunteers, pupils, and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence, and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes:

- contextual safeguarding;
- the identification and classification of specific behaviours; and
- the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as banter or part of growing up.

- providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE and Relationships Education curriculum which develops children's understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe;

- ensure that there are clear and consistent boundaries to what is considered to be acceptable behaviour and children will understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour or language;

- creating a culture where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment, and have them listened to;

- having a robust online safety programme which develops children's knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self-protection when using the internet and social networking;

- having robust monitoring and filtering systems in place to ensure children are safe and act appropriately when using information technology in school; and

- pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.

There may be instances where staff feel it is necessary to go beyond teaching delivered through the curriculum in immediate response to a child's behaviour. This may include targeted work with individuals or groups to address behaviour which puts the child or others at risk, or behaviours which are repeated or habitual.

HEALTH & WELLBEING: VAPING

What are E– Cigarettes?

- E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol, or mix of small particles in the air.

- E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Most have a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold a liquid.

- Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some look like USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday items. Larger devices such as tank systems, or "mods," do not look like other tobacco products.

- E-cigarettes are known by many different names. They are sometimes called "e-cigs," "e-hookahs," "mods," "vape pens," "vapes," "tank systems," and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)."

- Using an e-cigarette is sometimes called "vaping."

Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes.

Some look like USB flash drives, pens,

How do E-cigarettes work?

- E-cigarettes produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavourings, and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol.

- The liquid used in e-cigarettes often contains nicotine and flavourings. This liquid is sometimes called "e-juice," "e-liquid," "vape juice," or "vape liquid."

- Users inhale e-cigarette aerosol into their lungs. Bystanders can also breathe in this aerosol when the user exhales it into the air.

Vaping:
High lead and nickel found in illegal vapes
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65614078

Why is Nicotine unsafe or children, teens & young adults?

- Most e-cigarettes (vapes) contain nicotine—the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products.

- Some vape product labels do not disclose that they contain nicotine, and some vape liquids marketed as containing 0% nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.

- Nicotine can harm the developing adolescent brain. The brain keeps developing until about age 25.

- Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

- Each time a new memory is created or a new skill is learned, stronger connections – or synapses – are built between brain cells. Young people's brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed.

- Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

How does nicotine addiction affect youth mental health?

- When a person is dependent on (or addicted to) nicotine and stops using it, their body and brain have to get used to not having nicotine. This can result in temporary symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.

- Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, restlessness, feeling anxious or depressed, trouble sleeping, problems concentrating, and craving nicotine.[3] People may keep using tobacco products to help relieve these symptoms.

- Youth may turn to vaping to try to deal with stress or anxiety, creating a cycle of nicotine dependence. But nicotine addiction can be a source of stress.

- What may start as social experimentation can become an addiction.

    * The most common reason that high school students give for *trying* an e-cigarette is "a friend used them."

    * The most common reason youth give for *continuing* to use e-cigarettes is "I am feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed."

- Youth e-cigarette and cigarette use have been associated with mental health symptoms such as depression.

What are the other risks of E-cigarettes for children, teens and young adults?

- Scientists are still learning about the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes.

- Some of the ingredients in e-cigarette aerosol could also be harmful to the lungs in the long-term. For example, some e-cigarette flavourings may be safe to eat but not to inhale because the gut can process more substances than the lungs.

- Defective e-cigarette batteries have caused some fires and explosions, a few of which have resulted in serious injuries.

- Children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing e-cigarette liquid through their skin or eyes. Nationally, approximately 50% of calls to poison control centres for e-cigarettes are for kids 5 years of age or younger.

How do I know if my child is Vaping?

Start by asking your child in a non-judgmental, concerned way if they have tried vaping. You want to encourage conversation, not shut it down. Even if you don't think your child vapes, talk about it with them anyway so they know it's unhealthy.

Signs of vaping include:

- new health issues such as coughing or wheezing
- e-cigarette supplies, like cartridges or other suspicious looking items
- new smells (some flavourings are banned, but others are in nicotine and marijuana vapes — so parents might notice fruity or sweet scents)

What can I do to prevent my child from using E-cigarettes or to help them stop?

- Set a good example by being tobacco-free and ensure that your child is not exposed to the second hand emissions from any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

- If you use tobacco, it's never too late to quit.

- Talk to your child or teen about why e-cigarettes are harmful for them.

- Start the conversation early with children about why e-cigarettes are harmful for them.
  Let your child know that you want them to stay away from all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, because they are not safe for them. Seek help and get involved.

YOUTH VAPING - THE RISING TREND

Vaping appears to be everywhere nowadays. It seems you can't walk anywhere without seeing colourful advertising or catching a sickly-sweet smell in the air. While vapes (e-cigarettes) are meant to be used as a 'quit-tool' for smokers rather than a new method for non-smokers, one trend has been slowly on the rise in the last few years — youth vaping.

Ineqe have received reports across their Safer Schools community that children as young as 8 years old have been found vaping at schools across the UK. It also follows concerns from healthcare officials that youth vaping is gradually on the rise in the UK, despite selling vapes to under 18s is illegal. Online safety experts have taken a more in depth look at youth vaping and you can find more information on the potential risks and helpful tips that will help you to better understand the issue and how it might impact the young people in your care.

Vaping Fast Facts

- Vapes come in many shapes and sizes. Some might look like everyday items such as pens or flash drives or even hoody drawstrings!
- These 'e-cigarettes use a heated metal coil within a covering to create inhalable vapour from a liquid form of nicotine called 'e-liquid'.
- E-liquid ('e-juice' or 'vape juice') is a formula composed of nicotine and other chemical ingredients.
- The UK government has recently called for evidence into youth vaping.

Red flags

Vaping can be a lot more discrete than smoking, and may be happening without a parent, carer, or teacher noticing it. There are various signs to be aware of with youth vaping, such as:

- An unexplained cough, wheeze, or shortness of breath.
- Empty disposable vapes, plastic cartridges, containers, or bottles.
- Irritable behaviour if unable to go outside or have a break.
- Sudden mood swings, frustrations, paranoia, or anxiety.
- Lingering scents that are fruity or sweet smelling.