



Safeguarding Newsletter—Summer Term 2 2022

Dear Parents and Carers
 I hope you found our first safeguarding newsletter helpful. This half term’s newsletter will focus upon Online Safety
 Please remember, our DSL’s are:
Mrs C. Davies—DSL
Mrs S. Richardson—Deputy DSL
Mrs A. Perrett—Deputy DSL
Mrs C. Mulligan—Deputy DSL

Our DSLs can be contacted via the school office, or by telephone on 01384 389900.

You can also contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on: 0300 555 0050 **If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999.**

Best wishes
 Mrs C. Davies

Online Safety
 Using online facilities to help with learning, keep in contact with others and to give some ‘down time’ is part of all of our lives, but it is important that we all know how to keep children safe when doing so .

Did you know?
 All social networking platforms and apps have minimum age limits. Some social networks use technologies that might not be appropriate for some ages, or engage with communities that are made up of people much older than your child.

What are the risks of an underage social networking account?

- Many sites include an instant message function which allows private conversations. Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are.
- Most social networking sites have an app version, meaning your child will have access to the social network from their smartphone or tablet. Some app versions of social networks use the location of the phone.
- Chat rooms and forums can connect people who are complete strangers and can be un-moderated.
- Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may be spread.
- It isn’t easy to take back information that has been posted – and can be impossible if it’s already been shared.

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

Under 13	13+	16+	17+
Roblox PopJam FaceTime	Twitter Facebook and Messenger Viber WeChat Monkey Yubo Dubsmash Instagram	TikTok Skype Google Hangouts Reddit Snapchat Pinterest	WhatsApp Telegram Messenger Tumblr Line Sarahah Tellonym

What can I do to keep my child safe?

1. Think about online routines: Have a conversation with your child about online safety and agree some rules to help keep them safe.
2. Have a conversation about online pressures and cyberbullying: Remember to talk to your child about what they are doing online and who they are talking to. Check in with them regularly and remind them they can talk to you, another trusted adult, like a teacher, or a ChildLine counsellor, about anything they are worried about.
3. Set up devices safely: Make sure you set it up with your child, exploring any safety features. Remember to use parental controls!
4. Keep children safe on conferencing apps: Supervise your child when they use these apps; remind your child not to share chat links or passwords on social media; explore any security features like how to report and block; talk to your child about what they are sharing.

Jessie & Friends is a series of three animations that follow the adventures of Jessie, Tia and Mo as they begin to navigate the online world, watching videos, sharing pictures and playing games. There's also a storybook for each episode, to help you and your child keep the conversation going. The key message throughout Jessie and Friends is that if a child is ever worried by anything online, they should tell a grown-up who they trust and who will help them. The animations and additional activities give children great opportunities to learn about trust, being kind online, consent, and healthy and unhealthy behaviour on the internet.
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/jessieand-friends/>



Support for children

It is important you allow your parents/carers to oversee your technology use when out of school, this is to keep you safe.

Some of the risky things you may come across online are:

- Bullying by people you might consider 'friends'
- Seeing inappropriate or harmful content (e.g posting rude or sexual pictures)
- Posting personal information that can identify and locate you offline
- Being persuaded to do illegal or inappropriate things through contact with strangers
- Seeing information and talking with others online who encourage self-harm
- Seeing racist or hateful material
- Being encouraged to leave or run away from home by someone you met online If you are concerned you can contact Childline or <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

If you experience any of the above you **MUST** tell an adult you live with or you can also let any staff know at school. We also have a duty to safeguard you.

Click on the NSPCC link to find out more information regarding how to support your child with online safety.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

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Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

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Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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