

# Learning Opportunities

### SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

## February 2024

Advice for Parents and Carers

Welcome to our latest Safeguarding newsletter.

We aim to provide you with useful links, tips and the latest, relevant help and advice on issues we feel will be of importance to you.

If you would like any more information, please do not hesitate to contact the school



## Children's Mental Health Week <u>5-11 February</u>

Launched in 2015 Children's Mental Health Week exists to empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK – this year's theme is 'My Voice Matters'





Kindness causes elevated levels of dopamine in the brain, helping us feel happier.



Kindness is a simple way to help EVERYONE. When we are kind to each other, it helps us to feel connected, which means we forge new friendships or deepen existing ones. What we say matters.

Research has also shown that when we're kind, when someone is kind to us or even if we just witness kindness, our bodies release feel-good hormones which lift our mood.

It's also been shown that people who are kind have much lower stress levels, age more slowly and have healthier hearts. Kindness isn't just a nice thing to do, but can help us improve our own well-being, while helping others at the same time. Children's Mental

Health Week is a perfect time to start!



Online Safety Day

27th February 2024





## **Online Safety**

#### What is wearable technology and is it safe for children?



Some students will have received gifts at Christmas they can use to go online so it is a good opportunity to give some thought as to how we can all support them to stay safe in the virtual world whilst having fun.

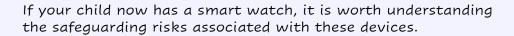
# Wearable technology is any kind of electronic device designed to be worn on the user's body.

Common examples of wearable technology include:

- Smart jewellery smaller devices typically work with a smartphone app for display and interaction.
- ❖ Fitness trackers monitor physical activity and vital signs. They may connect wirelessly to an app for data storage, processing & reporting.
- ❖ Augmented reality (AR) headsets use a real world setting and integrate digital information into a display of the user's environment in a way that enables interaction with real world and virtual reality.
- ❖ VR headsets entirely replace the user environment with digital information and enhance the fictional reality.
- ❖ Virtual assistants these can be clipped to clothing and are controlled with voice and gestures. Humane's AI Pin can answer questions, find information and carry out tasks in a similar manner to Amazon Alexa and Apple's Siri.

#### Smart Watches

https://parentzone.org.uk/article/smart-watches-and-fitness-trackers





#### Parental controls

Think of the smart watch as more like a wearable smartphone, rather than a watch that lets you know if you've missed a call – and consider the same things you would with a mobile device, like whether you need to restrict or manage access to certain content, downloads and purchases.

You can set up your child's Apple Watch to connect to your iPhone, and then use the Apple Watch app to manage its settings.

Once the devices are paired, you can manage communications limits, notification settings, restrict explicit content or purchases, set an emergency contact, schedule down time or limit access to certain features during school hours.

#### https://ineqe.com/



### YouTube cartoon series called Jeffy

Jeffy is part of a wider trend of animated videos that may look child-friendly but content-wise, they're not.

iNEQE Safeguarding Group have found that despite the video's child-friendly animation style, online safety experts have found videos portraying sexual content, nudity, violence, gore, and more inappropriate themes.

#### iNEQE advise parents & carers to:

**Stay calm.** If you suspect the child or young person in your care has watched Jeffy or other inappropriate cartoon-style content, don't panic. Approach them calmly, ask open questions and listen. Importantly, avoid mentioning Jeffy or similar animations by name as you may be accidentally alerting them to something they knew nothing about!

**Talk to them.** If you know for sure they have viewed inappropriate content, ask them to explain what they have seen and give them space to tell you in their own words. It may be emotional or embarrassing to discuss, but being able to talk through complex feelings in a supportive environment will help them.

**Identify help**. It's important that children and young people have someone they can turn to for help, even if that person is not you.

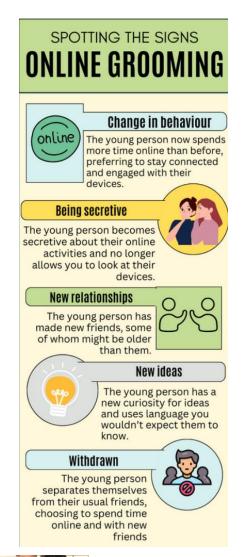
**Check safety settings**. Ensure the correct safety settings are in place on the devices your child has access to and use the <u>Online Safety Centre</u> to learn how to restrict content, block and report on the platform.

### The Dangers of Online Grooming and Radicalisation

Online grooming, with the intention of radicalising children and young people, is more common that many people assume.

Children and young people may be unaware that they are being groomed as they believe they have made friends online rather than being recruited.

Therefore, it is essential for parents and carers to understand the warning signs of online groomers. The best way to protect your child online is through open communication. Discussing the dangers of online grooming and extremist content with your child is a good way to raise awareness. It is also crucial to emphasise that not everything they read online is true.





## World Events - Explaining the News to Our Kids

There are a lot of distressing events happening around the world, which your child may see online.

Children of all ages are getting news from a variety of places. Whether it's from friends, TikTok, YouTube, or home, they can be inundated with information, different perspectives, and even graphic images and videos of breaking news. They may have trouble fully understanding news events - threatening or upsetting news can affect them emotionally. Many can feel worried, frightened, angry.

Common Sense Media & Childnet have published information on how to address and support your child when they see something worrying or upsetting online.



https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/explaining-the-news-to-our-kids

https://www.childnet.com/blog/navigating-violentonline-content-from-global-events/

### Fake News and Fact Checking

## How can fake news impact children & young people

Harmful belief systems: if children watch content that spreads hate, this can become a part of their worldview. This could lead to mistreatment of people different from them or even lead to radicalisation and extremism.

**Dangerous challenges or hacks**: some videos online might promote dangerous challenges or 'life hacks' that can cause serious harm.

**Confusion and distrust**: If a child becomes a victim of dis or misinformation, they might struggle with new information. This can lead to distrust, confusion and maybe anxiety, depending on the extent of the misinformation.





### Building Healthy Relationships and Recognising Toxic Friendships

Being online is an important part of how young people 'do' relationships. Young people are using online spaces for their social and romantic lives.

Developing new relationships can teach us how to handle and understand emotions, increase communication skills, boost self-confidence, and create a sense of belonging. But being in an unhealthy relationship negatively affects a young person's wellbeing. They might feel anxious and nervous or not free to make their own decisions.

These topics aren't always easy to talk about, so #AskTheAwkward has been created to help you to explore online relationships with your secondary aged children, making these conversations part of everyday life.

#### https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/ask-the-awkward/

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/globalassets/asktheawkward-a-parent--carersintro.pdf

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/globalassets/asktheawkward-parents--carers-helpsheets.pdf

#### Signs of unhealthy relationships

An unhealthy relationship is one where a child is not being treated with respect. They might be forced or coerced into doing things they aren't comfortable with, be made to behave in a certain way, or be made to feel they aren't good enough. Because young people don't always realise when they are in an unhealthy relationship, it is important that adults are able to recognise the signs.



https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/report-remove/

Report Remove is a tool that allows young people to report an image or video shared online, to see if it's possible to get it taken down. Provided by Childline and IWF, it keeps the young person informed at each stage of their report and provides further support where necessary.

To use Report Remove, children just need to follow three steps:

- 1. Follow the instructions to confirm their age. If they're 13 or older, they can choose to prove their age using an age verification service called Yoti, though this is optional. They will need some ID if they want to do this.
- 2. Log in or create a Childline account so they can receive updates on their report.
- 3. Report and remove: share the image or video securely with the IWF, where a specialist analyst will review it and work to have it removed if it breaks the law. They will give it a digital fingerprint to help spot the image or video across the internet and take it down.

Childline will let the young person know the outcome of their report and provide further support where needed. And they're always welcome to speak to a counsellor about how they feel, whether online via 1-2-1 chat and Childline email, or via the free confidential helpline on 0800 1111.

More information about how each of the different ways to speak to a Childline counsellor can be found at <a href="https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support">www.childline.org.uk/get-support</a>

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



#WakeUpWednesday

1 LISTEN

ASK TWICE



EMPATHISE

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about ou those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opp dialogue then say something like 1 know when something like that has hap felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?

#### THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION



5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

#### MIND YOUR LANGUAGE



#### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'



### Meet our expert



## Sources of Information and Support



## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about



**PEGI** 12

Five Nights at Freddy's is a series of indie point-and-click horror games whose word-of-mouth success and widespread spin-off content on YouTube have helped each of the nine instalments so far to sell almost five million copies on Steam (the PC gaming platform) alone. Set in various deserted locations at night, with creepy animatronic characters suddenly coming to life, the games are rated PEGI 12 for disturbing/violent content, mild profanity and horror themes.

## FRIGHTENING THEMES

DOOR

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE 18

## STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

## PLAYING IN ISOLATION

#### IN-GAME SPENDING

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### **USE PARENTAL CONTROLS**

#### TRY IT YOURSELF

#### LIMIT SPENDING

#### SPOT THE SIGNS

#### TALK ABOUT THE RISKS

22 Before you allow your child to play Five Nights at Freddy's, it's wise to have a conversation about the game so that they're aware of the potential risks. Ensure that your child understands that the series is purposely designed to be tense and unsettling, and that they should stop or take a break if the intensity of the gameplay is making them feel uncomfortable or putting them on edge.

#### Meet Our Expert

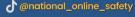














### Disposable vape ban

The number of children using vapes has tripled in the last three years.

This is extremely worrying given the unknown long-term health impacts and the addictive nature of the nicotine in vapes.

The sale and supply of disposable vapes is being banned in England. There will also be the strengthening of the regulation of vape flavours, packaging and how they are displayed in shops.

Our Safeguarding Team are always available to offer support and guidance on any safeguarding issues or concerns.

### **Our Safeguarding Team**



Simon



Kev



Cath

Our School website features a Safeguarding area which includes links to our policies and our parents / carers & visitors

Safeguarding leaflet

https://learningopps.org/safeguarding/

Please contact Simon Graydon (Designated Safeguarding Lead) if you have any Safeguarding / Child Protection concerns: <a href="mailto:simong@learningopps.org">simong@learningopps.org</a> 01304 381906 / 07394 984289 / 01304 371527

Don't forget to also download the free National Online Safety App which can help you keep up-to-date with new developments in keeping your child/ren safe.

