



# Learning Opportunities



## SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

December 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.

*Please note change of DSL contacts at the end of this newsletter*

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

The traditional image of Christmas is incredibly optimistic, and it can be wonderful, but we must remember that it certainly isn't a given for everyone. It can be a tough time because expectations are high and for some there can be the added pressure to 'have a good time'.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone especially at this time of year, we have to be extra-vigilant and offer support where we can and be proactive where we suspect or see the signs of abuse and neglect, and seek the help of the police and social services.

### Concerned about a child?

Call [03000 41 11 11](tel:03000411111) (text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11)

email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk)

Out of hours and in an emergency

Outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call [03000 41 91 91](tel:03000419191).

**If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call 999 for the emergency services.**



### KCC – Christmas HAF provision

The HAF Programme offers families of children aged 4-16, who are eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM), opportunities to access a range of free activities in the Christmas holidays.

The HAF programme of Christmas provision is now available on The Education People website (take a look under "where can I go for information about programmes in my area").

<https://www.theeducationpeople.org/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-kent-haf/welcome-information-for-families/>

# Some Safeguarding Issues to be mindful of over the Christmas period.



## Having a safe online Christmas is about more than just shopping.

As if you needed reminding, Christmas is just around the corner. However, you may still have gifts, decorations and other festive items to buy before the big day. With the COVID-19 pandemic still very much with us, shopping on the internet may well be your preferred choice, making it very important to make sure you're buying safely and securely, and not falling victim to a scam.

But a safe online Christmas is also about far more than shopping: it's how you set up and use those new connected devices, make sure the young people in your life are going online safely and responsibly and remain vigilant when there's so much going on around you, including keeping yourself and the family protected from the virus.

This year, it may also be more difficult to physically get together with loved ones and friends, so you'll also need to take care when connecting with them online.



#onlinechristmas

We've put together some expert tips to help you get through this year's festive season online with safety, security and confidence.



### Online shopping

Make sure you can spot the difference between genuine and **fake websites**, secure and **insecure payment pages** and authentic and **counterfeit goods**. You can find more information at [www.getsafeonline.org/safechristmas](http://www.getsafeonline.org/safechristmas)

### Scams

Fraudsters love the festive season, using the opportunity to send fake links in emails, texts and posts, or even email attachments posing as Christmas parcel delivery notifications. They could also call you claiming to be from your bank, a retailer, a delivery firm or software support company, but with one aim – stealing your money or identity. If in any doubt, always call the organisation on the number you know to be correct.

### Phones, tablets & computers

Protect all new or second-hand internet-connected phones, tablets and computers with a **reputable security app/software**. Some suppliers offer a single solution that protects multiple devices. Add a **PIN or passcode** as soon as you power up. Ensure all devices are **regularly backed up** so you don't lose your valuable documents and other files, or those precious photos.

### Software, operating system and app updates

Download updates to operating systems, apps and software as soon as you're notified that they're available. If you don't, you risk devices being infected by malware, and possible fraud or identity theft. Better still, set them to update automatically.

### Mobile apps

Download apps only from official sources such as App Store, Google Play or Microsoft Store. Apps from unofficial sources could result in fraud or identity theft.

### Smart devices & wearables

To improve security, **passwords on internet-connected devices** like voice assistants, CCTV cameras, appliances, kids' toys and fitness watches should be changed from the factory default as soon as you unpack and switch them on. Always use different passwords for different devices, websites or accounts to avoid them being hacked. Be careful what you say within hearing distance of **voice assistants** as you can't be sure what conversations they're picking up.

### Gaming

With new consoles and games coming out this year – and continued use of existing ones – remember to stay safe and secure, including avoiding oversharing, grieving, overspending on in-game properties and pirated games. Don't lose track of how much time you're spending online. Pass on this advice to your children too, including what interactions they're having with strangers.

### Second-hand mobile devices

If you're selling or gifting a computer or mobile device, **perform a factory reset** to erase your data. You can find out how from the manufacturer's website. If you've bought or been given a pre-owned device, remove the previous owner's settings and data if this hasn't already been done.

### Out & about with your mobile devices

**Wi-Fi hotspots** in cafés, pubs, hotel rooms, on public transport or other public areas may not be secure. They may also be fake, set up by a fraudster. For this reason, avoid connecting with them if you're doing anything confidential online. Keep devices themselves protected from theft or loss. Be wary of people watching your screen over your shoulder.

### Avoid oversharing

Stop and ask yourself if **what you're about to share on social media** is really necessary. Could it be helping a fraudster? Could it give your children a digital footprint they don't want? Posting about being away could be telling a burglar that your home is empty. And why not take a few minutes over Christmas to review your **privacy settings**?

### Safeguarding children

Help the children and young people in your life to protect themselves. **Have the talk about safe and responsible internet use**, including what they share, who they're communicating with and the type of content they access, including apps and games. Consider downloading a respected parental control app and using ISP filters to block unsuitable content. Make sure your children aren't running up bills for in-app or in-game purchases.

### Video calls

This year, many of us will be catching up via a video call. Apart from using a service that everyone finds easy to use, **make sure it's secure** by choosing one that needs a strong password, and don't share the call invitation or details outside the group on the call.

For more information on how to stay safe online this festive season, visit [www.getsafeonline.org/onlinechristmas](http://www.getsafeonline.org/onlinechristmas)

## Talkie AI App

This app is rated as 17+ by the App store and 12+ by Google Play.

Talkie is an AI chatbot app. Users can use the app to create and interact with AI characters.

You should also be aware that this app includes in app purchases ranging from £4.99 - £49.99.

Talkie does offer a Teenager Mode; however, the content still may not be appropriate for your child. Bark reviews this app here, and recommend that your child should not be using this app:

<https://www.bark.us/app-reviews/apps/talkie-app-review>

## The 'Add Everyone' Explicit WhatsApp Group

The INEQE Safeguarding group have issued an alert regarding a WhatsApp group known as 'Add Everyone.' Find out more here:

<https://ineqe.com/2024/10/31/safeguarding-alert-add-everyone-whatsapp-group/>

## Tips to help you talk about cyberbullying

Internet Matters have collated their tips to help you talk about cyberbullying with your child based on different age categories. The information is divided into four sections:

1. Before you start the conversation
2. Things to talk to them about such as how to deal with cyberbullying
3. What to do next
4. Where to get further help

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issue/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-conversation-starter-guide>

The Safer Internet Centre also has some excellent advice in their Parents' Guide to Technology and includes device-specific settings for different models. Explore more about parental controls. Families may want to think about setting up a Family Agreement as suggested by Childnet International.

At the bottom of this edition, we have attached the latest Kent Police Child Centred Policing Newsletter December 2024, which includes a link to their first parent / teacher online session due to take place Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 at 1600 hours. The subject for the first session is "Sextortion" which is a form of online intimate image abuse.

Also attached are helpful guides for parents / carers around online safety and social media, and an scooter flyer that covers the legalities with use as these are often popular presents that cost lots of money and can be seized by police.



## How to manage Christmas expectations

Children are regularly exposed to a range of views about what Christmas should mean to them and what to expect. Television, playground conversations and even well-meaning family members can all set unrealistic expectations of what will happen over the festive period.

It can be tricky managing the different needs and expectations of family members at Christmas. In particular, Christmas can bring unique challenges for neurodivergent children and young people, where unfamiliar routines, sensory inputs, and social demands can cause distress.

Christmas often brings change to usual routines and activities, and for many change can lead to uncertainty. This uncertainty can result in anxious feelings and dysregulation. Keeping routines in place not only supports your child's needs but could also ease the transition back to 'normal' after the festive period.

There's no doubt that Christmas can be an expensive time. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking our children should have shiny new presents to open on Christmas day, but buying new is often much more expensive. Buying second hand, for example online or in charity shops, can take a lot of pressure off you.

### **Your attention is the most important gift**

Sometimes, our attention over the Christmas period can become distracted as we worry about the specifics of providing for our children. But what our children want most is the attention of their parent / carer, and sometimes challenging behaviour is an attempt to get it. Think about how you can make the day special simply by being present and taking an active interest in spending time with your children.

Family relationships can be difficult at any time, and the hustle and bustle of the festive season can often make existing problems or worries worse.

FamilyLine is a great resource for discussing the pressures that can arise when your trying to manage your children's expectations at Christmas. You can get in touch via phone, text message, email or webchat for emotional and practical support and guidance.



0808 802 6666



Text: 07537 404 282



Online Chat



[familyline@family-action.org.uk](mailto:familyline@family-action.org.uk)

Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm.

Outside these hours, text FAMILYACTION to 85258, to access free 24/7 crisis support service delivered in partnership with Shout. This is also available on weekends and bank holidays



# Wellbeing Advent Calendar



**mind**  
Bath

1

## 3,4,5 Breathing

Breathe in for 3 seconds  
Hold for 4 seconds  
Breathe out for 5 seconds

Repeat a few times, as long as it feels comfortable, to encourage your body to move into a more relaxed

2

## Try Colouring

Colouring can be relaxing, and something to focus on.

Find colouring on our website [bit.ly/BathMindColouring](http://bit.ly/BathMindColouring)

3

## Notice Positives

Write down 1 positive thing that's happened.

However small that may be. Try to do this every day.

4

## Take a Wellbeing walk

Try a gentle walk every day.

Join Bath Mind's wellbeing walk every Thursday - contact [info@bathscape.co.uk](mailto:info@bathscape.co.uk)

5

## Check in with a friend...

It's been a really tough couple of months... I wanted to check in. How are you?

6

## Bring nature to your home

This could be:  
Nature photographs  
Plants and Flowers  
Letting fresh air in

7

## Try something new

Join a group or learn a new skill like photography, sewing, craft or yoga.

8

Plan one activity each day.

9

## Plant a seed, watch it grow!

Find gardening and eco-therapy tips suitable for all spaces, on our website.

[bit.ly/BMGardening](http://bit.ly/BMGardening)

10

## Breathe

Take time to sit quietly and notice your breath.

Close your eyes. Relax in the moment.

11

## How are you sleeping?

### Reduce screen time:

Turn off screens an hour before bed, as the blue light can send signals to your brain that it is still day time.

12

## Read a book

Find your favourite place to relax and read a good book.

Visit a library or ask a friend they could share or recommend.

13

## Engage your senses to feel grounded

### Notice...

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

14

Allow your eyes to adjust to the day by looking out at the sky when you wake. Take a gentle walk to start the day.

15

## Reduce Stress

Take time out for activities you enjoy. Perhaps a walk, a run or an exercise class?

16

Think of three things you are grateful for.

Try to do this every day.

17

## Be Creative!

Draw, sketch, paint, knit, sew, crochet, write, bake.

Focus fully on the activity.

18

## Listen to music

Dance or sing along if you feel like it!

19

## Connect with others

Call someone you can talk to - tell them how you are feeling.

Call Bath Mind if you need help or support.

20

## Create a Bedtime routine

A bedtime routine may be going to bed at a similar time each night; taking a shower or bath or reading a book before going to bed.

21

## Spread kindness.

Share a smile

22

## Start a journal or diary.

Note how you think and feel.

You may like to write every day.

23

## Cook and eat your favourite meal

Enjoy something homemade, healthy and nutritious.

24

## For more free resources, go to

[bit.ly/BMWWellbeingActivities](http://bit.ly/BMWWellbeingActivities)  
[@bathmind](http://@bathmind)  
[www.bathmind.org.uk](http://www.bathmind.org.uk)

For help and support, visit [www.bathmind.org.uk](http://www.bathmind.org.uk)



## Avoiding Christmas scams

While Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, it also brings an increase in scams.

As you shop for the perfect gifts this holiday season, remember to do what you can to check you are dealing with a reputable trader.

**AVOID** - Websites that don't have a full company name or a UK address - it can be more challenging to recover lost funds and you can be less confident that the goods are safe.

**Stay Savvy:** If you come across a deal that seems unbelievably good, take a moment to pause and research it. Sometimes, offers that appear too good to be true might have hidden catches.

**Use secure payment methods:** When shopping online, look for the padlock symbol in the address bar and 'https://' in the URL - this indicates that the site is secure. If you are making a purchase, credit cards are more secure than debit cards because they offer better protection against fraud and unauthorised charges.

**Delivery scams:** These scams are very common. Typically, you get a text or email saying a parcel couldn't be delivered for some reason. You are then asked to click a link and pay a fee to re-schedule delivery - enabling the fraudsters to steal your personal and financial information. Never click on the links in delivery texts or emails. If you are expecting a parcel from a delivery company, track it and contact them through their genuine website.

**Loan fee scams:** Christmas can be an expensive time but if you are after a little extra cash to help out, be aware of loan fraud. The fraudsters ask for a fee for a loan, but once the fee is paid, the loan offered never materializes - leaving you out of pocket with your financial information in the hands of criminals.

**Where to go for advice:** All issues should be reported (online or by phone) to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline - they can provide basic advice, signposting and refer anything that is a criminal matter to the local Trading Standards team.

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: [0808 223 1133](tel:08082231133)

Children & Young People in Kent and Medway can access specific support services  
- they are just a text, call or a click on website or app away.



ChatHealth is available for young people aged 11 to 19 in Kent and offers a confidential and anonymous texting service to a nurse via 07520 618850. However, the service is only available Monday to Friday and between 9am and 5pm.



Created by young people for young people. If you are aged 10 to 16, [Moodspark](#) is a place where you can learn how to look after your emotional and mental health and find ways to help you bounce back when life gets tough.



[Good Mental Health Matters](#) provides information to help you make small changes to improve your mental health and give you the tools you need to cope when things get tough. There are videos to watch on five ways to keep stress in check and protect your mental health.



The [Mind and Body programme](#) is delivered to 13 to 25-year-olds in school and the community to explore and better manage thoughts and behaviours associated with self-harm.



### **CHUMS specialist bereavement support**

[CHUMS](#) offer specialist bereavement support to children and young people from 3½ up until their 26th birthday in Kent and Medway. This specialist bereavement service is provided by a wide range of experienced, trained professionals and volunteers. Support can be tailored to provide evidence-based interventions to children and young people through 1:1, group and drop-in sessions.

### **Kent Youth Health**

Through [Kent Youth Health](#) young people or their parents / carers can contact the school health teams from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, including during school holidays. Find out more including how to refer yourself at [www.kentyouthhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.kentyouthhealth.nhs.uk)



Today's children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also challenges. Concerns are growing that children's mobile use is undermining their academic learning, along with their mental health and social relationships.

Within school phone use not only distracts the single student using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. We want our students to use their electronic devices responsibly and in moderation. By working together, we hope to put systems in place to avoid overuse and misuse. We also continue to educate students on how to use devices responsibly.

### What Is Phone Addiction?

Phone addiction is the obsessive use of a smartphone. The behavioural addiction is often dubbed as "nomophobia," or the fear of being without a mobile device. People with a phone addiction may experience anxiety, agitation, and disorientation if they are unable to use their smartphone.

It can be tough for parents / carers to distinguish between what is a "normal" amount of mobile phone screen time for a teenager, and when it has become an addiction.

Smartphone addiction is real and the more that teenagers are using the apps, the more their behaviour is reinforced by the dopamine that is induced through their mobile phone usage.

Research has found that excessive mobile phone usage, specifically social media, can cause similar chemical responses in the brain that are caused by drug addiction.

If you are concerned that your child is spending too much time on their phone, you may wish to consider:

- Setting time limits on your teen's phone use
- Restricting screen time 1-2 hours before bedtime
- No phones at the dinner table
- Setting periods or days as a family where you go "tech-free", participating in other activities together that get everyone in the home off their phone
- Using parental controls to set time restrictions on certain apps
- Having them turn off notifications so screens are not constantly flashing
- Teaching them about the health consequences of spending too much time on their mobile phones

How can you, as parents and carers, successfully help your child to thrive in the digital age? Where does the correct balance lie between giving your child freedom on the internet and putting controls in place to keep them safe on social media?

PAPAYA has tried to collate some up to date helpful top tips on online safety and some more practical solutions to help you navigate your way through.



## Eyes Open – the campaign to stop criminal exploitation

### Police in Kent launch campaign to combat child grooming by drug gangs

The Eyes Open campaign is dedicated to educating young people and their parents about the dangers of grooming, exploitation, and the deceptive tactics used by county lines gangs.

These operations rely heavily on the exploitation of children and young people, who are used to transport and sell drugs across different locations.

Once the child is dependent on the gang, they are coerced into criminal activities, often with threats, violence and manipulation.

Families and loved ones of the child are also threatened.

To help raise awareness about criminal exploitation and empower parents and carers, Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit have issued 11 types of behaviour to recognise the signs of exploitation.

#### The 11 types of behaviour to look out for are:



Frequently missing from school or home

Being found out of the area

Returning home late

Being late to school

Changing friendship groups

Mixing with older men or women

Talking about people giving them free food, vapes, alcohol and cigarettes

Having more than one mobile phone or many SIM cards

Getting unexplained amounts of money, mobile phones, clothing, jewellery, new haircuts or other items and gifts

Receiving excessive calls or messages from unknown adults or friends

Getting picked up or dropped off in cars by unknown people

Some signs can resemble typical teenage behaviour, such as mood swings, secrecy, or changes in social circles.

However, police say that if parents and carers feel uneasy or notice unusual patterns that raise concern, it's crucial to trust their instincts.

**Gangs will use all kinds of bribes to get children and young people on their side, there is always a catch. Protect your child by spotting the signs of child criminal exploitation.**

For help, call anonymously  
Crimestoppers  
800 555 111

For advice, call confidentially  
NSPCC  
0808 800 5000





## Get help and support

There are lots of organisations who work to support families and children. Visit [childnet.com/get-help](http://childnet.com/get-help) if you're worried about an online concern.

**NSPCC** 0808 800 5000  
[nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)  
Free support and advice for adults concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child.

**family lives** 0808 800 2222  
[familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk)  
Free support and advice on any aspect of parenting and family life.

**YOUNGMINDS** 0808 802 5544  
[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)  
fighting for young people's mental health  
Free support and advice on how to support young people's mental health and wellbeing.

## Helplines for children & young people

**childline** 0800 11 11  
[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)  
Providing help and support for under 18s.

**THE MIX** 0808 808 4994  
[themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)  
Providing help and support for 13-25 year olds.

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

### Our Safeguarding Team



**Kev**

[kevind@learningopps.org](mailto:kevind@learningopps.org)  
Tel: 07546 724134



**Kate**

[kates@learningopps.org](mailto:kates@learningopps.org)  
Tel: 01304 381906

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

<https://learningopps.org/safeguarding/>

Lesley Buss (proprietor) has a strategic leadership responsibility for Learning Opportunities safeguarding arrangements.

**Please contact Kevin Dunk (Designated Safeguarding Lead) if you have any Safeguarding / Child Protection concerns:** [kevind@learningopps.org](mailto:kevind@learningopps.org) 01304 381906 / **add mobile number for kev**



*From everyone at Learning Opportunities we would like to wish you a happy and safe Christmas & New Year.*



Get the latest crime statistics by visiting: [www.kent.police.uk/yourarea](http://www.kent.police.uk/yourarea)

## Happy Christmas

We hope you have had a good term and are looking forward to the Christmas break.

This edition of our newsletter will cover some of the work that the Child Centred policing teams have been doing as well as highlight upcoming projects.

As always if you have a general enquiry, please contact [childcentredpolicing@kent.police.uk](mailto:childcentredpolicing@kent.police.uk)



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## News

### Safer Internet Day 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025

The UK Safer Internet Centre have announced that this year's theme is 'Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online'. Each year they aim to cover an online issue or theme that speaks about the things young people are seeing and experiencing online. The theme is created in collaboration with young people across the UK and this year will focus on the issue of scams online and for young people, how to protect themselves and others, as well as what support is available to them. Child Centred Policing have an online safety session in support of "Too good to be true?" theme and your local teams will be coordinating this so please feel free to make contact for more information.

### Christmas

Christmas brings lots of new gadgets and gizmos for young people. Kent police would advise family's that all packaging for these items are disposed of sensibly so as to reduce crime by not highlighting that a household has a new laptop, xbox, tv etc. With these new devices bring the concerns around online safety and how parents keep their children safe online. Please see below links and the additional attachments sent with this newsletter around parental guidance.

[Online Safety Guidance for Parents | SWGfL](#)

[Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Resources | Childnet](#)

[Online Safety Leaflets & resources - Internet Matters](#)

[Parental Controls on Smartphones & Other Devices - Internet Matters](#)

[Inclusive Digital Safety advice for Parents and Carers | Internet Matters](#)

[Guardian's guide to TikTok](#)

[Parental Guide for Teens on Instagram | About Instagram](#)

[How to guide for parents – snapchat – Internet Matters](#)

## Recent Projects

### Anti bullying week

During the week of the 11th November, our divisional Child Centred Policing Teams worked tirelessly through the school week, in both secondary and primary schools delivering key messaging about anti-

Get the latest crime statistics by visiting: [www.kent.police.uk/yourarea](http://www.kent.police.uk/yourarea)

bullying. Our central team created a bespoke package for delivery in conjunction with the anti-bullying alliance, which the divisional teams presented to over 10,000 students in all corners of the county. Anti-bullying is a key week for our Child Centred Policing Teams as it is a great opportunity to work with students to give them the confidence to recognise the signs when they or a friend are being bullied and also the confidence to be able to speak up and say something when it is safe to do so. Bullying can often sadly lead to more serious crimes if it is not dealt with in the correct way. The theme of this years Anti-Bullying campaign was centred around respect for everyone and carried the key theme of 'The behaviour we walk past is the behaviour we accept.'



## Operation Chalkboard

Just a reminder for you on the use of operation chalkboard when calling Police. It relates to serious offences that require urgent assistance where:

- A serious incident occurs to a **child** on the **way to or from school**
- There are trespassers on school grounds who are posing a serious threat to pupils, staff or parents
- There are visitors to the school who are or are perceived to be posing a threat to pupils, staff or parents
- Any other incident occurs whereby there is an immediate risk to the physical safety of any person legitimately on school premises

## Parent Teacher Conference

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting our first online workshop for parents and teachers. The event will be held on Microsoft teams Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 1600 -1700 hours. The subject covered will be "sexortian" and will give guidance on what this is, signs to look out for and what to do if you or someone you know finds themselves a victim of this crime type.

[Please click here to register for the event](#)

We would like to hear from you on future subject matters. What would you like learn more about and build your knowledge on.....please make contact with suggestions [childcentredpolicing@kent.police.uk](mailto:childcentredpolicing@kent.police.uk)



Get the latest crime statistics by visiting: [www.kent.police.uk/yourarea](http://www.kent.police.uk/yourarea)

## Who to contact across the county

### **Dartford and Gravesham**

PS Nikki Lee [Nikki.Lee@kent.police.uk](mailto:Nikki.Lee@kent.police.uk) and PS Siobhan Rowe [Siobhan.Rowe@kent.police.uk](mailto:Siobhan.Rowe@kent.police.uk)

### **Medway**

PS Raj Dusanjh [Raj.Dusanjh@kent.police.uk](mailto:Raj.Dusanjh@kent.police.uk)

### **Swale**

PS Carli Deacon [Carli.Deacon@kent.police.uk](mailto:Carli.Deacon@kent.police.uk)

### **Maidstone**

PS Andrew Stringer [Andrew.Stringer@kent.police.uk](mailto:Andrew.Stringer@kent.police.uk)

### **Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks**

PS Ian Loader [Ian.Loader@kent.police.uk](mailto:Ian.Loader@kent.police.uk)

### **Ashford**

PS Katie Reed [Katie.Reed@kent.police.uk](mailto:Katie.Reed@kent.police.uk)

### **Canterbury**

PS John Woodward [John.Woodward@kent.police.uk](mailto:John.Woodward@kent.police.uk)

### **Dover**

PS Gavin Rolfe [Gavin.Rolfe@kent.police.uk](mailto:Gavin.Rolfe@kent.police.uk)

### **Thanet**

PS Sheena Maclean-Bell [Sheena.Maclean-Bell@kent.police.uk](mailto:Sheena.Maclean-Bell@kent.police.uk)

### **Folkestone and Hythe**

PS Adam Plant [Adam.Plant@kent.police.uk](mailto:Adam.Plant@kent.police.uk)

# GOLDen rules for parents and carers

## Ground advice

- Discuss and agree as a family how the internet will be used in your home. Let your children tell you what they think is and isn't acceptable for them to do online, such as not being nasty to people, keeping personal information private and speaking to an adult when they are worried. Then add your own rules such as how long they can spend online and when and where webcams can be used.
- You might find it helpful to write these 'ground rules' down as a visual reminder.
- Make sure your child understands that their actions and behaviours online can have offline consequences.
- Remember these are whole family rules, so consider your own use of the internet and think about how much information you are sharing on your social networks about your children and who can see it, such as school photos.
- Agree on what will happen if they don't follow your family rules.

## Online safety

- Make sure you apply parental controls to all internet enabled devices in your household, including tablets, phones and games consoles. They can restrict access to inappropriate content and can help you manage how much time your child spends online.
- Make sure your child understands the parental controls are in place to protect them, not restrict them; some children will actively work around parental controls if they feel constrained without knowing why.
- Set up filters on internet search engines to limit the likelihood of your children accidentally coming across inappropriate content when searching online.
- Be aware that internet history can be hidden and deleted, so talk to your children and supervise their online use appropriately.
- Remember filters and parental controls are not 100% effective so you cannot rely on them alone to protect your children. It is important your children understand they should tell you straight away if they see something inappropriate or upsetting online.

## Listen

- Take an active interest in your child's online life and talk openly with them about the things they do. Talk to you child about which websites and apps they like to use and why; engage in their online world with them.
- Be aware of any changes in behaviour, language and attitude in your child. These behaviour changes can indicate something is upsetting your child online. Children who are groomed, radicalised, abused or exploited online will often be pressured to withdraw from family and friends.

## Dialogue

- Talk to your children – be open and positive when talking about the internet.
- Make sure your child knows they can come to you for help if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable. Many children won't disclose online worries because they are scared adults will blame them or remove their access to the internet.
- Ask your child if they know where to go for help, where to find safety advice, information about privacy settings and how to report or block users on their games and websites.
- Explore their games and websites together to ensure your child knows how to block and report anyone who is nasty or inappropriate. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply and to keep any evidence. If the game/app has a 'parent section', explore the parental controls and reporting systems yourself.
- Ensure your child understands pictures, videos or comments posted online can be very difficult to remove and rarely remain private.
- Discuss the pressures for young people to send inappropriate or nude(indecent) images to each other. How might this behaviour affect their relationship? Do they know what they would do? Young people need to be aware images can be copied, saved and shared without their knowledge and if they are under 18, they may also be breaking the law by making an indecent image of themselves.



**Kent  
Police**

**THE EDUCATION  
PEOPLE**



# WhatsApp

## safety guide for parents

internet  
matters.org

13+

WhatsApp's  
minimum age  
in the UK

58%

Kids aged 3-17  
who use  
WhatsApp

37%

Kids under 13  
who use  
WhatsApp



## 5 tips to keep kids safe on WhatsApp



1

**Review privacy settings** WhatsApp has a range of privacy and security settings to keep users safe. Customise groups, app access, live location and more.



2

**Customise contacts** Show your child how to report and block unwanted contacts. Then, work with them to add their friends and family. Review and talk about their contacts regularly.



3

**Talk about personal information** Make sure your child understands what personal information is. Talk about the importance of keeping that information private on WhatsApp.



4

**Show them where to get support** If something goes wrong or they see something worrying on WhatsApp, make sure they know to come to you, and talk about other sources of support.



5

**Check in regularly** Once you've done all of the above, check in with them regularly to review settings and how they use WhatsApp.

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# E-scooters – are you breaking the law?



**Can I ride my e-scooter to school or work?**

**No, it's Illegal...**

E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles and are required to be taxed and insured. It's not possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it's illegal to use them.

**Can I ride my e-scooter on the pavement?**

**No, it's Illegal...**

You cannot use e-scooters on public footpaths, cycle lanes or roads.

**What happens if I'm caught using my e-scooter in public spaces?**

**The scooter may be seized and as a result, destroyed.**

If stopped by an officer, you may be asked to complete a breath and drugs test. You also risk a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for no insurance.



**Kent  
Police**

## **Think before you buy:**

The number of electrical scooters being used on our streets has risen, as well as reports of serious injury and fatalities.

For more information and advice on the use of e-scooters visit [www.kent.police.uk/road-safety](http://www.kent.police.uk/road-safety)

## What Children & Young People Need to Know about

# FREE VS HATE SPEECH

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It's not the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and values. We all have a responsibility to use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to those around us, rather than making offensive and threatening remarks. That's called 'hate speech' and knowing the difference is incredibly important.

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.

Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's theories were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin, even today. A frequent exchange of ideas is vitally important for a healthy society.

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having ours challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Freedom of expression includes the right not to do something, like not standing up for – or singing – the national anthem. Even though some people would find that offensive, it isn't illegal. By law, nobody can force you to say anything you don't want to.

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote, decent working conditions or same-sex marriage – couldn't have been achieved without it.

Hate speech refers to any communication – like talking, texting or posting online – that negatively targets a group or an individual because they are perceived to be different in some way. Demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs would all count as hate speech. Here are some common forms it takes...

Targeting people or groups because of a protected characteristic – like race, gender identity, sexuality, nationality, religion or a disability – and verbally abusing them with slurs and name-calling. The Equality Act 2010 has more information on this.

Content that dehumanises people based on the same characteristics: referring to them as if they were animals, objects or other non-human entities, for example. Separating the target from other human beings is usually an attempt to justify the speaker's bigotry.

Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups and justifying and glorifying those actions. Suggesting that a certain group should be removed from society could be seen as a call to arms, for example – potentially putting people from that group in danger.

Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior (or even that they are criminals) to encourage others to view them in the same way. This kind of thinking is always incorrect – but can be incredibly harmful to the group in question.

Spreading damaging misinformation about a person or group that the speaker views as "different" – essentially, trying to turn others against them by lying. Someone might claim that a recent tragedy is the fault of this entire group, when this is simply not possible.

Promoting the segregation of certain groups, or discrimination against them, because of who they are. This has been illegal in the UK for a long time – but some people still try to promote the exclusion of others, which can cause a huge amount of distress.

### Meet Our Expert

The Global Equality Collective is an online community for homes, schools and businesses, a collective of hundreds of subject matter experts in diversity, equality and inclusion, and the organisation behind the GEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

GLOBAL  
EQUALITY  
COLLECTIVE

The  
National  
College

NOS  
National  
Online  
Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

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