Child Online Safety for Parents

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Sandwell
Prevent Team
Safeguarding against extremism

Did you know!?

According to a You Gov statics report (January 2020), when parents were asked about online gaming...

- 50% of Parents said that they were worried about their child's internet use
- However, only 20% of parents engaged with their children in games online

But, what does this mean…?

…. let's get engaging! As parents, it's important to be present with what your children are doing online to keep up to date - the online world changes very quickly!

The tips in this guidance will help you to **safeguard your child** online.

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Aims of the guidance

Increase your awareness of child online safety by:

- Identifying the issues children encounter online.
- Identify ways to keep your child safe online.
- Recognise the online risks and what they could lead to.
- Be aware of how to manage online issues and risks.
- Know where you can access information and support.

Online Safety issues for Children

- 1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social network site
- 1 in 3 children have been a victim of cyberbullying
- Almost 1 in 4 children have come across racist or hate messages online
- In 2018 there were over 19,681 counselling sessions with young people who talked to Childline about Online issues (up 7,681 since 2017)

Cyber bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. This includes social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites and chat rooms such as Facebook, XBox Live, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and other chat rooms.

Ofcom 2019 – Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report

- **50% of 12-15 year olds** say that they have seen something hateful about a particular group of people since 2018.
- **25% of 12-15s** who play games online say they have played against people they don't know – with boys being more likely to do this than girls (31% vs. 17%).
- Girl gamers are on the increase. **Almost half of girls aged 5-15** now play games online – up from 39% in 2018.
- **39% increase in parents of 5-15s** who are concerned about their child seeing content which might encourage them to harm themselves.
- **Only 50% of parents** have controls set up on their child's gaming devices.

Apps and Social Media

Please find below, information about different apps and social media commonly used by young people.

Here are some key safety facts to think about regarding all social media and some popular apps / games:

- **Be aware that when users sign up to apps, it's possible to lie about your age without any checks being done.**
- **Extremist influencers are almost certainly using mainstream social media like those shown above.**
- **The attraction for influencers to use social media is that they can get a large following of young people as it's popular with them.**
- **Influencers use popular topics like news, sports, beauty and gaming to attract young people to their information, this often then links to their extremist content.**
- **Children are choosing to get their information and news from social media / apps – safety and monitoring for these are key.**

WhatsApp

- To use WhatsApp, you must be at least 16 years old. www.whatsapp.com/legal
- Messages and online status (if somebody is currently using the app) can be set to private.
- Messages can be coded by users so that others can't see, however the police can do work to look at this.
- You can make face time video calls using the app.
- WhatsApp has become more popular over the past year – with Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram it's one of the top social media apps used by children.

Snapchat

- The legal age to use Snap Chat is 13. No one under 13 is allowed to create an account or use the Services. www.snap.com.
- When you download Snapchat, it asks for your date of birth. If you're under the age of 13, you're directed to 'SnapKidz'.
- Snapchat has short videos (10 seconds or less) that disappear. This can be an issue if you want to view them afterwards.
- Snapchat has an update which has raised concern. It lets people see other users (can be strangers) on a map and then click on their name and view their profile and videos.

Instagram

- The legal age to have an Instagram account is 13 years old.
- If a child is younger than 13 years old and has created an account, you can show them how to delete it.
- Instagram has been linked as 'troubling' for young people as users often only upload edited and filtered photos that don't show the real image.
- Instagram has a useful 'Tips for Parents' page.

  https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc[0]=Instagram%20Help&bc[1]=Privacy%20and%20Safety%20Center

YouTube

- https://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en
- The legal age to use YouTube is 18. If you are under 18, you must always have parent or guardian's permission.
- YouTube say more than 200 million users watched video-game-themed content on its platform every day.
- Problems occur with YouTube as people try to seek fame by sharing videos aiming for the most views and likes.
- YouTube remains a favourite for young people to watch rather than TV or TV apps.
- There have been issues as young people have searched for and watched videos for things that they have seen in the news or that interest them without proper guidance / discussion with a trusted adult.
- YouTube have a page that covers their policy on violent extremist content. For October – December 2018 there were 49,618 videos removed.
- The figure is now around 85,000 videos removed.
- https://transparencyreport.google.com/youtube-policy/featured-policies/violent-extremism?hl=en_GB&policy_removals=period:Y2019Q1&lu=policy_removals

Facebook

- Facebook requires everybody to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account.
- Creating an account with false info goes against their terms. This includes accounts registered on the behalf of someone under 13.
- You can setup your page and posts to select whether your posts are private, to friends or the public.
- There have been issues with Facebook. Including live videos of attacks (Christchurch, New Zealand) and Facebook have been accused of not removing individuals/groups expressing somewhat extreme views.

Roblox

- Problems of grooming and online child abuse have been linked to Roblox as players are made up from users of all ages.
- We're aware of a case study where a 10-year-old had been groomed online into joining an extremist hate chat group and then committing a violent extremist attack (child groomed by an adult pretending to be a young person).
- Players aged 12 and younger have their posts and chats filtered for unsuitable content and to stop personal information from being posted.
- To agree to Roblox's terms you need to be 18 or have parent's/guardian's permission to agree to them. However, you can be any age to have an account.
- Account holders can stop who can chats with them.
- Roblox have a useful 'frequently asked questions' page for parents. https://corp.roblox.com/parents/

Fortnite

- PEGI rating of 12 due to frequent scenes of mild violence.
- It is not suitable for players under 12 years old.
- Fortnite is a Zombie style shooting game which has an in-game ‘voice chat’ feature.
- We’re aware of instances where younger siblings have overheard their older sibling playing the game and the younger sibling thinking that it was real life and that an attack was going to happen.`
- Gaming chat features have been linked to issues for grooming and into gang related issues and radicalisation.

TikTok

- If you are under 18 years old, you can only use TikTok with consent from your parent or guardian.
- TikTok is short 15 seconds of music /dance video sharing.
- TikTok is one of the newest and most popular apps, especially during COVID-19 with young people making home videos for the above.
- Recent concerns reported with a video circulating, apparently showing a very graphic image of a person taking their own life.
- There are issues with TikTok like with other apps, with users trying to gain fame and becoming a target for online groomers.
- Any user can comment on your child’s video if their account is set to public.
- As TikTok is a newer app, influential extremists and groups have moved their activity to the app after being banned from other apps.
- A recent BBC Panorama investigation found that TikTok failed to ban a ‘child predator’ after the BBC had made a fake account to report this.

Ways to keep your child safe online

- ✓ Limit your child's time on the internet and stick to it - consistency is key!
- ✓ Take phone and all electronic devices away from children at night and when you are away for long periods.
- ✓ Children to seek permission from you before downloading any apps. Stick to the age limits and monitor.
- ✓ Regular monitoring – check search history, apps and talk history, every day or at least twice a week.
- ✓ Accounts are private, and location is turned off.
- ✓ Report any issues through the apps/websites.
- ✓ Set clear and consistent boundaries - work with your child.
- ✓ Turn on parental control settings on all devices.
- ✓ NSPCC/O2 call free helpline 0800 800 5002 - to set up parental controls, adjust privacy settings or get advice on social networks.

New and Developing issues

- New apps may not have the same ways to report issues and safeguard as those that are more established.
- Current online culture can lead to additional pressure on young people having to have the 'perfect image' or to be the best online (to be 'beautiful' on social media or high performing on games).
- Issues have been raised with these attracting the attention of online influencers, looking for those that can influence others.
- Social media is often used to reel in young people by giving an unrealistic and attractive impression of what other's lives are like.
- There has been a rise in V-logs (video diaries) as children are being drawn to online 'role models' in their area of interest.
- Videos or messages showing things that people find 'funny' or show issues / conflict tend to travel faster and get shared more often. This includes memes ('funny' images or very short videos that can be offensive and have been linked to racism).
- These videos can lead to fake news, cyber bullying or even criminal consequences on those sharing them.
- Memes, dark humour & language used on games gets the interest of a younger audience.

Fake news

Fake News *is false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.*

This image shows fake news to share a hate message which is inaccurate to what was happening in the image. *This is of concern as it can create confusion and tension.*

The real story - what she actually said….

"I would like to say not only have I been devastated by witnessing the aftermath of a shocking and numbing terror attack, I've also had to deal with the shock of finding my picture plastered all over social media by those who could not look beyond my attire, who draw conclusions based on hate and xenophobia."

"My thoughts at that moment were one of sadness, fear, and concern."

"What the image does not show is that I had talked to other witnesses to try and find out what was happening, to see if I could be of any help, even though enough people were at the scene tending to the victims."

"I then decided to call my family to say that I was fine and was making my way home from work, assisting a lady along the way by helping her get to Waterloo station."

"My thoughts go out to all the victims and their families."
She also thanked photographer Jamie Lorriman, who had spoken out in her defence and pointed out that other photographs had shown she was visibly upset.

It was not the only time that the user @SouthLoneStar tried to get involved in British affairs and after the EU referendum vote, tweeted: "I hope UK after #BrexitVote will start to clean their land from muslim invasion!" and "UK voted to leave future European Caliphate! #BrexitVote".

It was one of many accounts seen as linked with US politics but tried to get involved in wider issues in Europe. They have all been suspended by Twitter.

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Click Bait

Click Bait *is something on a website that encourages people to click on a link. It sometimes comes up as a tab or* ***highlighted*** *text. Whilst links can be useful to lead people to more/detailed information but be aware that some links are used for clicking bait.*

- Click Bait is often used to lead people to click on a link which generates income for a website and/or gains popularity on pages/with groups.

- The image shows a social media post by Britain First who posted the image and asks people to share if they agree.

- Most people would usually agree that this image is a nice image of Britain, however, Britain First is a Far-Right group and sharing this image would gain popularity for the Extremist group.

Online Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and develop extremist thinking associated with terrorist groups.

Calls for government to act on online radicalisation in light of Mold machete attack

Published date: 02 November 2016 | Published by: Owen Evans

The government has been urged to focus on far-right radicalisation in light of a machete attack in Mold.

Delyn MP David Hanson urged security minister Ben Wallace to focus on the issue during a House of Commons debate on online radicalisation.

Radicalisers prey on people that are vulnerable, including children, to try to influence them to the way that they think/their ideology.

Because of the internet's popularity, radicalisers are increasingly moving to the online space.

This image shows propaganda used by Daesh.

Propaganda is information that is spread for the purpose of promoting some cause.

If a young person finds propaganda online, much of what they see will appeal to them. This is because it's likened to their views on some issues and makes children think they are supporting groups that are doing good or for the disadvantaged.

In short, even intelligent, compassionate and charitable young people can be vulnerable to extremist narratives. If a young person sees a post like this and they don't know how to think critically about the information or if they don't think that they can talk to a trusted adult about the views in the post, they can be easily led into thinking that such groups are virtuous.

Online Radicalisation

Online recruiters are relentless – they use the same techniques as grooming...

It's **IMPORTANT** to check…

- ✓ Who your child is talking to and listening to
- ✓ What and who they are watching
- ✓ Where they are going – the sites they are visiting

Possible signs of online radicalisation

- ➢ Increased secretiveness - especially around internet use
- ➢ Isolating themselves from family/friends
- ➢ Denial when challenged
- ➢ De-sensitised to difficult situations
- ➢ Talking as if from scripted speech
- ➢ Increased levels of anger
- ➢ Becoming disrespectful or targeting specific groups
- ➢ Asking inappropriate questions
- ➢ Having extremist/terrorist materials or attending events
- ➢ Changes in: behavior, their language used or their appearance

NOTE – these can also be normal teenage behaviour! You know your children and will know when their behavior is of concern.

How extremists influence online

What's concerning is extremists often use images, videos and music that young people and children will know or like in their posts online and then link this to their information.

Charity? The propaganda shots show jihadis handing out cash to members of the public at a dole office

An example shown here is captioned, Charity? "Jihadi's handing out cash to members of the public at the dole office"

This shows how extremists use popular news to try and increasing their engagement and followers on social media/online platforms.

Here Britain First using the Poppy Appeal to attract people to like their information.
And asking people to share their information and linking it to British wildlife and a cute image of a squirrel.

How do I talk to my child about being safe online?

Working as a TEAM to stay safe online

Sites like www.NSPCC.org.uk have some excellent information for online safety and promote exploring the internet together with your child as a **T.E.A.M**.

- **T**alk about staying safe online.
- **E**xplore their online world together.
- **A**gree rules about what is okay and what is not.
- **M**anage your family's settings and controls.

Talk

- ✓ Tell your child to speak up and that they should not keep secrets if something is worrying them.
- ✓ Reassure them that you're interested in all aspects of their life.
- ✓ Say that you'd like to talk about stuff they've seen online, sites and apps they visit, and that you'll share the things you've seen too.
- ✓ Recognise that there will be positives to them being online, like using the internet to research homework, for example.
- ✓ Learn how to keep safe online together. This will help if online safety comes up as an issue later.
- ✓ **Talk often**. This will help you keep up to date with what they are doing online and who they are talking to regularly.
- ✓ Plan the time to talk into your family's week – this way you will prioritise the time to talk and you can share any worries or questions.

Ask your child if they know:

- Where reporting functions are
- How to block someone
- How to keep information private

Show them how to do these things….

- ✓ Use https://www.net-aware.org.uk/ to help
- ✓ Talk about online privacy, and being Share Aware

Explore

- ✓ Ask your child what sites or apps they like?
- ✓ **Write a list** - look at the apps together.
- ✓ Be positive about what you see and open up about the concerns you have: "I think this site's really good" or "I'm a little worried about the things I've seen here".
- ✓ Ask what they think is OK for children of different ages – they'll feel involved in the decision-making.

Be aware that your child might talk about friends who use apps or sites that you've decided aren't suitable.

Be ready to discuss your reasons but recognise that they may not agree with you.

Listen carefully for the reasons why?

Go through simple ways to protect their privacy. Avoid usernames like birth dates or locations that give away too much information.

Go through a final list of sites you both agree are ok and work out when you'll next discuss it.

Agree

- ✓ Agree how online behaviour – including sharing personal information, should be the same as what you would do in person.
- ✓ Agree to be careful what you share – sometimes people aren't who they say they are.
- ✓ Discuss images and photos, what might be suitable to share and what isn't.
- ✓ Discuss how photographs can give people a sense of you, and that sharing the wrong kind of image can give the wrong impression.
- ✓ Tell your child that if they're in any doubt they should talk to you first.When talking to your child - staying calm and approachable is the key.

Manage

✓ Set controls on all children's devices and yours if your children use them.
Call 0800 800 5002 and they'll talk you through it.

REPEAT ALL STEPS ON AT LEAST A MONTHLY BASIS

BE AS HONEST AND OPEN AS YOU CAN WITH YOUR CHILD

This will build trust. If your child is worried or come across worrying material online, they will be more likely to talk to you about this.

This is important because it will help you to see the risks and help you reassure them also.

If you are too strict they will not always turn to you when they are in need!

Information and Support

- NSPCC.org.uk
- Childline.org.uk/kids
- internetmatters.orgparentinfo.org
- educateagainsthate.com
- Let's Talk About It - www.ltai.info/
- Parentsafe.lgfl.net
- www.net-aware.org.uk/
- NSPCC/O2 - 0800 800 5002
- Vodafone Digital Parenting magazine - https://www.vodafone.co.uk/digital-parenting-order-form
- Inform the Police of a non-emergency on 101 or in an emergency call 999
- School Designated Safeguarding Lead
- If you need further information or if you have a query, email your local Sandwell Prevent inbox on Prevent_Inbox@sandwell.gov.uk

Prevent Training - Supporting information

For information, support or guidance on Prevent in Sandwell, you can email: Prevent_Inbox@sandwell.gov.uk

If you would like to talk to someone about any queries, concerns, or a referral do not hesitate to make contact via this email.

Prevent referrals

if you would like to submit a referral regarding an extremism concern go to:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200208/crime_prevention_and_emergencies/3608/tackling_extremism_and_terrorism_%E2%80%93_prevent

Report concerns anonymously

Anti-terrorist hotline - 0800 789 321

The Department for Education helpline: 0207 340 7264 or email: counter_extremism@education.gov.uk

Additional Resources you can visit online:

Educate Against Hate: http://www.educateagainsthate.com

Run, Hide, Tell: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film

Action Counters Terrorism (ACT): https://act.campaign.gov.uk

The Counter Terrorism Policing ACT Awareness e-Learning is now available for the public to access & complete: https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/

“
Don’t give your kids a hard time. But it’s important they are aware, that you are aware!
”
SANDWELL COUNCIL PREVENT TEAM