

Safeguarding: E-Safety

Information for Parents



Introduction

As a School, with a duty of care for young people and parents, we recognise the growing use of social networking sites among young people. Many young people are sophisticated in the way they use social media apps and websites, tailoring their communication for different audiences, and accessing them from a range of devices including smartphones, tablets, and games consoles. Most are used by young people in their own time with few, if any, problems being reported.

However, there is a negative aspect to social networking, in particular relating to cyber bullying and the use of forum websites. Incidents occur where anonymous questions and comments are posted online and cause young people to become upset.

This booklet is designed to make all stakeholders aware of the sites that are in the public domain, some of the language used and, most importantly, make sure you are aware of what we do in the event of being told about an incident of cyber bullying. By helping your child understand what the risks are, you can play a big part in preventing them from turning into problems.

Oxted School Safeguarding Team



Understand the risks young people may need to deal with

What they could see or do:

- Seeing or sharing of violent, sexual and pornographic content;
- Inaccurate or false information and extreme views;
- Promotion of harmful behaviours, including self-harm, anorexia and suicide;
- Actively or unintentionally getting involved in bullying or hurtful behaviour;
- Access to illegal, harmful or inappropriate images or other content;
- Unauthorised access to / loss of / sharing of personal information;
- The risk of being subject to grooming by those with whom they make contact on the internet;
- The sharing / distribution of personal images without an individual's consent or knowledge;
- Inappropriate communication / contact with others, including strangers;
- Cyber bullying;
- Access to unsuitable video / internet games;
- Plagiarism and copyright infringement;
- Illegal downloading of music or video files;
- The potential for excessive use which may impact on the social and emotional development and learning of the young person.

Who they might meet:

1. People who might bully, intimidate or frighten them.
2. People posing behind fake profiles for:
 - Mischief-making;
 - Sexual grooming and stalking;
 - Blackmail and extortion;
 - Identity theft and hacking.

How could this affect them:

- Fear of missing out leading to excessive use or exaggeration;
- Getting upset by things they have seen and being uncertain about what to do;
- Engaging, or being pressurised into engaging in more risky behaviour either by accident or by design;
- Developing unrealistic, and perhaps depressing ideals of body image and gender;
- Becoming subject to peer pressure or interactions that are intense or too difficult to handle;
- Creating an online reputation that may create problems for them in the future.



Ten Top Tips for Parents

1. **"What is bullying and Cyber-bullying?"** Cyber-bullying is a very specific form of inappropriate behaviour. This is different from children falling out with friends or banter.
2. **"Don't ever give out your own or your friends' personal information"** This tip is for any kind of cyber/text/ phone/gaming/online communication. Make sure your child doesn't make yours or their own personal information public - always check privacy settings on the sites they are using.
3. **"Digital Tattoos"** Help your child understand that they need to be careful what they put out into cyber-space. Pictures/ comments and any other information you put out onto the internet might stay there forever. So, think before you upload or send.
4. **"Make sure you understand the app!"** Ask your children what apps they are using. All apps/website/social networking sites/gaming sites have different settings. Make sure you know the privacy/safety settings and how the app works. If the app automatically posts your pictures into the public eye - not just to your friends - then, is it something you really want to use?
5. **"You CAN block and report people"** If your child has a bad experience online, they are able to block that person and report people to protect them from any more contact with them.
6. **"Have conversations about how they are using social media."** Just like in the real world if your children went out with friends or to a youth event or club. Ask how are things are going, is there anything they want to talk about? Do they know they can come and talk to you if things go wrong?
7. **"Keep calm, keep talking to your child"** if your child tells you they are being cyber-bullied or are worried, upset or scared about a cyber or real-world bullying issue then talk to someone you trust to listen and sort out the problem. It is important to keep calm, and record what has happened and when. This helps to build up the evidence that the hurtful actions are repetitive.
8. **"Save evidence of bullying online"** If your child is having a problem with someone online then you might think deleting the comments/images will make you feel better. But, if you do want to report the person - the best thing you can do is SAVE the evidence- screen shot the comments and save them somewhere safe.
9. **"Policing the internet"** If you find your child in a situation where you feel frightened or upset by repeated bullying and bad behaviour on the internet then you can go to the police. Some kinds of bad behaviour online are seen as harassment and the police can help in some cases. But you must build up evidence - so don't forget to screen shot!
10. **"Making sure it is resolved"** Once interventions have been put in place it is important to keep checking to make sure that your child feels safe.



Keep talking and stay involved

In the digital age, young people can't be completely protected, even by the best privacy controls; another young person may use different settings. So, it's important to keep talking to your child about the implications of social media. Getting a sense of what they think is a useful place to start; you may be surprised by how much thought they may have given to the issues.

Encourage your child to think carefully about the way they, and others behave online, and how they might deal with difficult situations.

- People may not always be who they say they are online: how can this create problems?
- Why is it unwise to meet anyone in the real world that you've only ever met online?
- Even if you think your messages are private, remember that words and images can always be captured and broadcast.
- People present themselves differently online - do they really look like that? Are they always having that good a time?
 - Be aware that screens, and especially being anonymous, can lead people to saying things they wouldn't say to someone's face.
 - What does being a good friend and a likeable person online look like?
- There can be pressure to be part of a particular group online or to be seen to be following a certain set of ideas. How can you take a step back and make your own decisions?

For more information...

You can find out more about how young people use social media, the apps they use, the risks they face, how to use privacy settings, and advice and tips about how to talk to your child at:

- www.childnet.com/sns
- www.internetmatters.org
- www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- www.parentzone.org.uk
- www.thinkyouknow.co.uk/parents
- www.askaboutgames.com



If you (as a parent) are concerned about an E-Safety issue

In the first instance, please contact your child's Head of House. They will then speak to the student(s) concerned and offer advice. They may also refer your child to websites, which offer support. If a student is found to have acted as a cyber bully to another student, sanctions will apply in line with the School Behaviour Policy.

In the event of the incident being related to a safeguarding concern, the school has clearly defined safeguarding procedures in place. Mr Wheatley is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If concerns are raised by students in school, we will inform parents where appropriate and will log all E-Safety concerns in a central log. This is in accordance with best practice recommended by CEOP and Ofsted. We will also alert external authorities if any illegal activity is suspected.

If your child is subject to cyber bullying, we would request your support in encouraging your child to provide us with evidence of the incident (e.g. screen shots, text messages which indicate bullying) as well as whether she has any indication of who is possibly behind it.

