WPS Parents' Safeguarding Newsletter

Advice from the Lullaby Trust

We know that the colder months can be difficult for families. Parents might be worried about paying your heating bills with the increase in energy prices and concerned about trying to keep their home warm.

It can be tempting for parents to wrap a baby up to keep them warm while they sleep, however overheating increases the chances of SIDS and research shows that it's better for babies to be cooler rather than too hot.

To reduce the risk of overheating parents should, avoid using thick bedding and duvets and remove any outdoor clothing and hats when they are indoors. During the winter months, firmly tucked in sheets and blankets (not above shoulder height) or a well-fitted baby sleep bag are fine for babies to sleep in.

To help the Lullaby Trust have put together some useful advice on safer sleep during the colder months. Click here to visit the webpage to find out more.

The Lullaby Trust have also published a guide for parents/carers who may find themselves in emergency situations where it may not always be possible to access a recommended sleep space for baby.

The Lullaby Trust have adapted safer sleep advice based on different sleeping situations.

How-to-Follow-Safer-Sleep-Advice-in-Emergency-Situations- Resource-2022.pdf (lullabytrust.org.uk)

#LookCloser

The Childrens Society continue to run their #LookCloser campaign with great success, this campaign has a wide range of valuable resources that can be used to highlight the risk of Child Exploitation.

Across the country, young people are being manipulated, sexually abused, forced to launder money and deal drugs. Exploitation isn't obvious. But it happens everywhere. And you can stop it.

Get to know the signs of child exploitation and how to report it through their award-winning #LookCloser campaign with the British Transport Police and National County Lines Coordination Centre.

Click here to view the campaign website and access its resources.
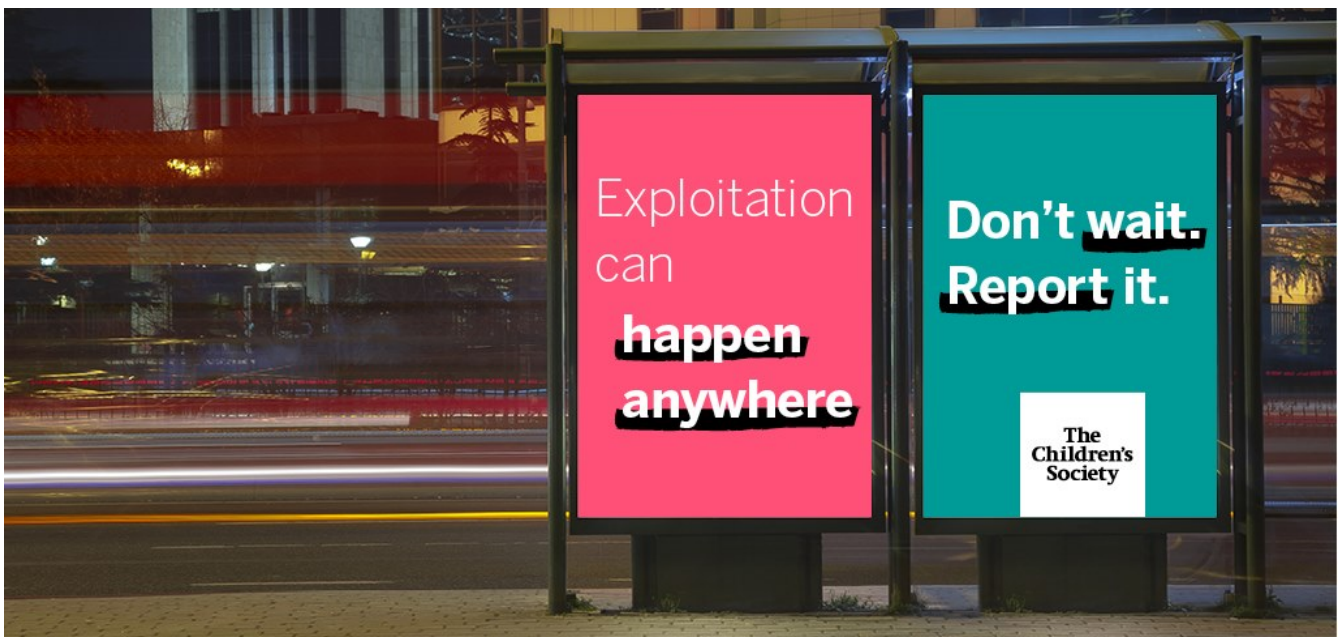
Online Challenges

In today's digitally connected world, children and adults are constantly presented with new ways to engage, react and contribute.

We're sociable beings; it's a natural human instinct, especially amongst younger audiences, to want to belong and join in. Viral Challenges (as they're often known) draw on these emotions and, as the name suggests, spread and gather pace very rapidly. New challenges are constantly emerging and evolving.

They're often completely innocent, raising awareness of worthy causes or simply providing amusement. However, they can have much more sinister undertones, putting children at risk of physical harm or, in extreme cases, fatal injury.

In this guide, you'll find tips on a number of potential risks such as mental wellbeing, physical harm and injury.

Training for Parents

Would you benefit from learning more about county lines and child exploitation? Alongside PACE (Parents Against Child Exploitation) and Barnardo's, Northamptonshire Police are offering a free workshop for parents on 11th January 2023, 7:00 - 8:30pm.

During the workshop parents will learn the following:

- What county lines and child criminal exploitation is
- Understand the signs that your child might be at risk or involved
- Learn how offenders groom and exploit children
- Understand what is happening in your area

Parents can book a place at this webinar by visiting NorthantsJan2023.eventbrite.com

National Online Safety®

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What parents need to know about
ONLINE CHALLENGES

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

As well as having the potential to cause actual physical harm, some challenges can be extremely upsetting for children. Many are created with the sole purpose of instilling fear in an individual in order to coerce them into doing things that could have a long-term emotional effect on them.

VARYING LEVELS OF RISK

As a parent or carer, it's important to take a balanced view and understand that not everything online has the potential to do harm. Mass-following and interaction can be a force for good. For example, the Ice Bucket Challenge, which swept the nation, set out to raise money and awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). At its height, over 28 million people uploaded, commented on, or liked Ice Bucket Challenge related posts on Facebook. It's equally important to be aware though that online challenges often have a darker side. Malicious trends and challenges can expose children to dangerous or even life-threatening situations, so it's critical that parents and carers are aware of the latest risks and understand what steps to take to mitigate them.

'FOMO' - FEAR OF MISSING OUT

The 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) is a strong emotional characteristic, particularly displayed in young people. The nature of viral challenges encourages children to explore and push boundaries. They tap into FOMO by feeding on a child's natural desire to join in, be accepted and share experiences with their friends and the wider online community. A recent study also found that FOMO is one of the greatest causes of Social Media addiction.

STRIVING FOR LIKES

In a major study by the Children's Commissioner, it was found that children as young as ten years old are reliant on 'Likes' for their sense of self-worth. A major concern around viral challenges is not knowing how far children will go to earn 'Likes'. Couple this growing appetite for acceptance with commonplace peer pressure and the potential problem is compounded. The result is that when young people are drawn into online challenges, because it is what all their friends are doing, saying 'no' can seem like a very hard thing to do.

"The coolest person at school will start a trend and then everyone copies her"
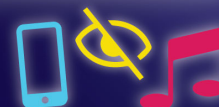Merran, 12, Year 7

"If I got 150 likes, I'd be like that's pretty cool it means they like you"
Aaron, 11, Year 7

Top Tips for Parents

COMMUNICATION & MONITORING

It's important to talk to your child regularly and monitor their online activities. Encouraging honesty and openness, will give you a much clearer viewpoint of how your child is interacting online and what concerns they have. Create an atmosphere of trust. Ensure they feel they can confide in you or another trusted adult regarding anything they may have seen or experienced online that's upset them.

THINK BEFORE ACTING

As with most concerns in life, let common sense prevail when it comes to Viral Challenges. Young people need the freedom and space to explore and going in all guns blazing may well be counter-effective. Address the importance of safety and wellbeing, both online and offline, by getting the facts and understanding the risks. Start a discussion about the Online Challenges that may have captured your child's interest, gauge their likely involvement and explain the importance of thinking and acting independently when it comes to participating.

SETTING UP EFFECTIVE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all online activity, ensuring you have effective parental controls set up on all devices will help filter and restrict the dangerous or inappropriate content you don't wish your child to access. Additional measures for protecting your child include checking the privacy settings on your child's devices, monitoring their friends list, ensuring their personal information is safe and secure and keeping a watchful eye on the content they're sharing.

REPORTING & BLOCKING

Parental controls can only go so far in blocking potentially harmful content. A rise in the decoding of social media algorithms, has led to age inappropriate content increasingly appearing on platforms and apps used by children. Where possible, you should regularly monitor what your child sees online and flag/report any content which is inappropriate or dangerous. You should take the time to talk to your child, define what you consider to be appropriate content and show them how to report and block users/accounts themselves.

VALIDATE SOURCES

Not everything is as it seems. Some people create fake content that's designed to 'shock' in order to encourage rapid sharing. If your child has seen something online that has triggered concern you should encourage them to, check its origin, verify that it came from a credible source and check the comments made for any clues to its validity.

FACING REALITY

Trends and Viral Challenges can be tempting for children to take part in; no matter how dangerous or scary they may seem. As a parent or carer it can be difficult to keep pace with the very latest Online Challenges emerging. In recent months these have included potentially dangerous crazes, including the 'Bird Box' challenge, which was inspired by Netflix's popular film and encourages followers to upload videos of themselves attempting everyday tasks while blindfolded. The best advice is to keep talking to your child. Show that your taking an interest and not just prying. Ensure your child knows they don't have to get involved and if they're unsure, let them know you're there to talk before they consider participating. Children often need reassurance that not everything they see online is real. If your child has viewed distressing or frightening content it's important to talk to them about their experience, support them and, if required, help them find additional support.

SOURCES:
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/fake-news-twitter-spreads-further-faster-real-stories-retweets-political-a8247491.html | https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2209452/Teen-dies-copying-pass-game-time-YouTube.html
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6307331/Boy-11-dies-YouTube-choking-challenge-mother-warns-parents-son-strangled-himself.html | Children's Commissioner Life in 'likes' report - RSPH - Status of mind report
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29013707 | https://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/fear-of-missing-out-fomo-one-of-greatest-causes-of-social-media-addiction-study-finds-36975296.html
http://www.tltp.co.uk/news/children-as-young-as-eight-addicted-to-social-media-likes/

Online Safety Resources (by age)

Internet Matters are continually bringing out new, updated resources for schools and for parents. They have recently put together 3 useful pages which contain a parent pack, common online safety issues, top apps and platforms and a few resources, all split by age to make things easier. You can find a link to each page below:

Early Years - click HERE.
Primary - click HERE.
Secondary - click HERE.

Connecting and Sharing Online (LGBTQ+)

Another great resource from Internet Matters, this one is a guide for parents to support LGBTQ+ children and young people including the benefits, the risks, the challenges and practical steps to protect children and young people including setting up devices, conversation starters, things to remember and dealing with online issues.

You can find a link to the article HERE.

We are also pleased to inform you that we now have our own LGBTQ+ group. Learners have been made aware of this and are free to come to the Thursday drop in meetings.

LGBTQ+ LUNCH CLUB

THURSDAYS 1:20-1:50PM

ROOM 1.13

SEE YOU THERE!

WOOTON PARK

WPS Safeguarding

Concerned about yourself or a friend?

Need some advice?

Learners can now text our safeguarding numbers 07857 801573 and 07857 801568.

WOOTTON PARK

Safeguarding Phone Numbers

We now have 2 safeguarding telephone numbers that can be used by learners or parents to call or text, 07857 801573 and 07857801568.

For Parents - Cyber Security

As well as schools having a good understanding of cyber security, it is really important for parents and children too.

Internet Matters have put together a really good, simple article so that parents can learn more about cyber security which you can access HERE.

There is also Cyber Sprinters for children aged 7-11, which you might find useful. You can find further details of Cyber Sprinters HERE.

The Cyber Choices Programme

Cyber Choices have recently updated their booklets for parents/guardians/carers. The Cyber Choices programme was created to help young people make informed choices about using their cyber skills in a legal way.

This is a national programme co-ordinated by the National Crime Agency and delivered by Cyber Choices teams within Regional Organised Crime Units and Local Police Force Cyber Teams.
The aims of the programme are to:

- Explain the differences between legal and illegal cyber activity
- Encourage individuals to make informed choices in their use of technology
- Increase awareness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Promote positive and legal cyber opportunities
- Provide further legal learning resources

Young people with an aptitude for hacking have a choice to make. Help your child take the legal route with their skills. If a child has an interest in computers/technology, it's important to have a discussion with them about their use of it.

Recognising and engaging with this interest may encourage them to follow the correct pathway.

For further information please visit Cyber Choices: Helping you choose the right and legal path - National Crime Agency

Keep your child safe on WhatsApp

There are a number of reports about the potential dangers of bullying and harmful content on WhatsApp. Fresh concerns have also been raised about the content on social media platforms, following the inquest into the death of Molly Russell. We ask staff to be vigilant to harassment and inappropriate behaviour taking place online and we would like parent/carers to do the same. Please find the below WhatsApp factsheet that we would like to share so we can work together to protect learners from harm.

What are the risks?

- Bullying, particularly in group chats
- Seeing content of a sexual nature, or showing violence and hatred
- Settings that allow messages to disappear after 24 hours or 7 days. This could make it harder to track bullying, and your child might share things they wouldn't otherwise because it'll disappear
- Sharing their live location, particularly with people they don't know in person
- Spam or hoax messages
- Being exposed to strangers through group chats

WhatsApp says the minimum age to use it is 16, but younger children can still use it easily.

6 steps to help your child use WhatsApp safely

1. Keep their personal information and location private
By default, WhatsApp shows profile photos, status and when you last used it to all users.
Encourage your child to only share this information with their contacts, and be careful about who they talk to on the app, as anyone could pretend to be a child online.
To check and change these settings:
- On an iPhone, open settings in WhatsApp (the cog icon), then Account > Privacy. Tap the setting you want to change, then choose who it should be visible to
- On Android, tap the 3 dots in the top-right of the home screen, then > Settings > Account > Privacy. Tap the setting you want to change, then choose who it should be visible to

WhatsApp also has a feature that you can use to share your 'live location' with others. Tell your child to keep this turned off, or to only share their location with people they trust.
To check this:
- On an iPhone, go to phone Settings (the cog icon) > WhatsApp > Location, and tap to change if you need to
- On Android, go to privacy settings as above, then scroll down to 'Live location', and tap to change if you need to

2. Remind your child to be careful about what they share
It's easy to forward messages, photos and videos to others on WhatsApp. Even if your child sets a message to automatically disappear or deletes it after sharing it, the person they send it to could still screenshot it, forward it to someone else, or save it.
So before they share anything, tell them to ask themselves: "Would I want others to see what I'm about to send?"

3. Remind your child they can leave group chats
If they see something they're not comfortable with in a group chat, or are in a chat with someone they don't know and are uncomfortable with, they should leave the group. To do this:
- On an iPhone, go into the group chat, tap the group subject, then > Exit group > Exit group
- On Android, go into the group chat, tap the group subject, then > Exit group > Exit

4. Make sure your child knows how to report and block people
When they first receive a message from an unknown number, they'll have the option to report it.
If someone in your child's contacts is upsetting them or making them uncomfortable, they can report or block them at any point (WhatsApp won't tell the user they've been blocked/reported).
To do this:
- On an iPhone, open settings in WhatsApp, go to Account > Privacy > Blocked > Add New..., then find the contact they want to block, and tap the contact
- On Android, tap the 3 dots icon, then Settings, then tap Account > Privacy > Blocked contacts, tap the icon in the top right showing a person and a plus sign, search for the contact they want to block, then tap the contact to block them.
To report issues like offensive or abusive content or spam:
- On an iPhone, open the chat with the user you want to report, tap the contact then then tap Report Contact > Report And Block
- On Android, open the chat with the user you want to report, then tap the 3 dots icon, then > More > Report

5. Encourage your child to watch out for spam and hoax messages
These can appear to come from contacts, as well as people they don't know. Tell your child to watch out for messages that:
- Ask them to tap on a link, or specifically to click on a link to activate a new feature
- Ask them to share personal information like bank account details, date of birth or passwords
- Ask them to forward the message
- Say they have to pay to use WhatsApp
- Have spelling or grammar errors

6. Tell our school about any bullying they experience
Look for signs they your child may be being bullied, like being afraid or reluctant to go to school, feeling nervous, losing confidence or becoming distressed and withdrawn, or losing sleep.