



Derry Hill C of E Primary School

Safeguarding Update – Spring Term 2024

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

If you are worried about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

The following members of staff are Designated Safeguarding Leads for Derry Hill Primary School:

- Mrs Roberts (DSL)
- Mrs Davis (DDSL)
- Mr West (DDSL)
- Mrs Asfaw (DDSL)

They can be contacted via the school office
admin@derryhill.wilts.sch.uk
or by telephone on 01249 812139.

For a copy of our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding 2023 Policy, please visit our school website

<https://www.derryhillschool.co.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=14>

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our Spring Term Safeguarding Newsletter. At Derry Hill Primary School, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and of utmost priority. The aim of our termly safeguarding newsletter is to communicate key information to parents concerning safeguarding and how as a school we aim to keep you informed to actively promote the safeguarding and welfare of all our pupils. We try to provide information that is helpful for our parents about situations that their children might face now or in the future.

Kind regards, Mrs Roberts

Teaching children about online safety



In school we use a range of resources to help teach children about online safety and our online safety teaching is covered through our computing and PSHE curriculum.

There are lots of websites which offer advice for parents about helping their children to stay safe online and have activities for children to support this. One example is the ThinkUKnow website <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/> which provides loads of really useful information about online safety including activities for your children to complete to support their online safety at home.

Another helpful site for parents is Natterhub for home [Natterhub.com](https://www.natterhub.com).

If you suspect a child is being abused or is in any danger of being abused please contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead or any member of staff.

You can also contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on:
0300 456 0108

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999.



Online Risks

As you will know, we are seeing a growing number of children using social media sites where they can be exposed to inappropriate and unsafe content. Our newsletter this term focuses on some of the risks to children being online, particularly if unsupervised.

Oversharing

Children and young people can sometimes feel pressure to overshare online. Remind them that they shouldn't share private things, such as:

- personal information, like names, phone numbers, links to other social media accounts or their school
- live or frequent locations
- other people's personal information
- links to join private group chats
- photos of themselves; photos of their body

Sharing their location

Many apps and games give you the option to share your location. You should help children think about how and when they're sharing it. Some of the ways they may be likely to share location include:

- tagging photos with the geo-location
- checking into venues
- sharing journeys
- location settings on your child's device
- sharing images or videos that contain street names etc.

If shared publicly, their location could be seen by someone they don't know. People could find out where they live or go to school, allowing an accurate picture of their daily routine to be built up.

Talking to people they don't know

Some social networking sites promote connecting you to chat with people you don't know. This puts young people at risk of grooming or online forms of abuse, along with the risk of moving the conversation to other platforms or meeting up offline. You should be aware of this across all social media.

Obsessive focus on likes and comments

Children may be very focused on how many likes or comments their posts get, which can leave them feeling that they aren't good enough, or not as popular as someone else. Try to help them remember that likes aren't everything. Instagram has an option to turn off likes on posts to ease the pressure.

Sending or receiving inappropriate content

Young people can feel pressured into sharing content that could be harmful to themselves or others. This could be in the form of sexting or sharing nudes, or it might be sharing memes and images of others without their consent which can be a form of cyberbullying. DMs (direct messages) can be used to share very quickly and the children have no control over how the image is shared further. Some social platforms have features such as disappearing messages where an image or text will only show for a certain amount of time for the recipient before deleting. This might make users feel they can share more, but the recipient can still screenshot and forward the content to others

Unrealistic sense of body image or reality

With so many influencers and users sharing photos, children can feel under pressure to conform to the 'ideal' body and lifestyle. It's important to talk about positive body image and help children see that what others post is a curated version of their life, and to question what they see online.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it does come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't completely control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to always meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint. Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they do make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you really want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects with people they know, they may still get friend requests from strangers. The Quick Add option lets users befriend people the app recommends – but these 'friends' are merely a username, which could have anyone behind it. Accepting such requests reveals children's personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features, potentially putting them at risk from predators.

EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). Spotlight Challenges tempt users into spending time producing content in search of cash prizes and online fame, while it's easy for children to pass hours watching Spotlight's endless scroll of videos.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat aren't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

Snapchat is an instant messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to people in their friends list. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures and messages 'disappear' 24 hours after they've been viewed; however, this content isn't as temporary as many believe – with some users saving screenshots or using another device to take a photo of their screen. This year, Snapchat added 'My AI': a customisable chatbot with which people can chat and share secrets, as well as asking for advice and suggestions of places to visit.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' effects on photos can set unrealistic body-image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

VISIBLE LOCATION

Snap Map highlights a device's exact position on a virtual map which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, only you (Ghost Mode) or selected friends. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to ensure friends have reached home safely – but which could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add feature helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).

CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

In 2021, Snapchat rolled out a new safety feature: users can now receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users that they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.

DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage your child to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.

CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind your child that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up – and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some challenges which become popular on the platform may have potentially harmful consequences.

KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone your child adds, unless they change the settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled (again via settings). It's safest not to add people your child doesn't know in real life – especially since the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchat users to see where your child regularly visits and checks in.

BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Sources: <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/20957803642-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-do-I-use-it> | <https://www.snap.com/en-GB/news/early-learning-from-ai-and-new-safety-enhancements> | <https://x.com/snapchat/2022/04/14/snapchat-ai-location-sharing-challenge> | <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/20220416844>

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