



SAFEGUARDING

January 2022

Welcome to our Parent Safeguarding Newsletter - January 2022

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Catmose College Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Emmerson - aemmerson@catmosecollege.com

Safeguarding Officers

Mrs Austin - vaustin@catmosecollege.com

Mrs Pugh - cpugh@catmosecollege.com

Mrs Beckwith - abeckwith@catmosecollege.com

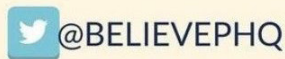
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Back-to-school anxiety is normal and understandable. Many pupils may feel anxious about going back to school after a break or a weekend, some may be nervous in relation to Covid.

Parents can help ease the transition back to school by recognising the symptoms of stress and anxiety and implementing some creative strategies.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL NERVOUS ABOUT RETURNING BACK TO SCHOOL



PLANNING

Get ready to return to school by planning your week. Use an activity diary to schedule in lessons and homework

SLOW DOWN

Take a moment to pause and slow down what you are doing

GET ORGANISED

Pack your bag and get all your school books and equipment ready. This can help boost confidence and reduce stress

ASK FOR HELP

If you feel you are struggling don't be afraid to ask for help from a friend or teacher

GOALS

Review your goals for the school year and agree on some new achievable targets with your teachers

BREATHE

Engage in some slow and steady breathing to help calm your mind and body

PROBLEM SOLVE

Come up with a list of solutions to a worry and choose one that you can put into action

IMAGERY

Take 5 minutes and imagine yourself in a calm and safe space

BE PATIENT

Ease yourself back into school and homework. Don't put pressure on yourself to get everything done at once

BELIEVE  **PERFORM**
Mental Health & Wellbeing

REASONS PUPILS MIGHT BE STRESSED OR ANXIOUS

Some pupils' worries are rooted in a fear of the unknown, especially if new routines have had to be introduced. They also may have concerns about workload and whether or not they have the skills needed to be successful. They might be worried about everything from wearing masks to being unvaccinated/vaccinated. They also may feel uncertain about what school will be like now.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY

The best way to address stress and anxiety is often simply to encourage your child to talk to you about what is troubling them. Listen without judgment and validate their feelings.

Sometimes, expressing their feelings is all a child needs to feel better.

Another great way to ease some of your child's anxiety about going back to school is to get your home ready for the transition. Strategies such as planning lunches ahead of time or establishing a comfortable homework area can help make pupils feel more in control and relieve some of their anxious feelings.

BE POSITIVE

One way to help ease anxiety and stress about restarting school is to remind your child about what makes going to school great. Aside from learning new things and participating in extracurricular activities, there is a lot that is good about College.

Remind your child about what they can look forward to about College, such as socialising with friends, sport, art, music and trips and visits.

ASSURE THEM THEY AREN'T ALONE

Remind your child that they're not the only ones who may be nervous about starting College again. Other students are likely to be just as anxious as they are about returning to College. Reassure them too, that the teacher knows students may feel nervous, and will spend time helping students feel more comfortable as they settle into the classroom.

PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING

One of the best ways to combat anxiety and stress is to address eating, sleeping, and exercise habits. Make sure your child gets enough sleep and eats a balanced diet. Getting adequate sleep and eating healthy food, especially a balanced breakfast, is important for brain function, mood, and the ability to focus and pay attention in school.

Likewise, your child needs plenty of opportunities to burn off steam. Some young people enjoy active sports while others enjoy a quiet afternoon reading or journaling. Every child is different. So, make sure you're choosing activities that are stress-relievers for your child.

KNOW WHEN TO GET OUTSIDE HELP

You know your child best. If you sense that their back-to-school anxiety may be rooted in something more serious, such as an anxiety disorder or a problem with another child, talk with your child and their tutor.

TOP TIPS FOR TECH GIFTS

Lots of children and young people will have received tech gifts this Christmas and whilst these are very exciting, need to be used responsibly. Here are a few tips to help:

SET UP AND PLAY WITH THE DEVICE BEFORE WRAPPING

The easiest way to explore the safety settings, reporting tools, and other features on the device you've just bought is by testing it yourself. If you can, charge it up and have a go navigating the safety tools, parental controls and resources provided. This process may be different per device, phone operating system, console network, or internet provider.

If you are not planning to open the gift before Christmas, ensure that filtering is applied to your home Wi-Fi and that you still set up the device before your child uses it.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has produced advice about smartphones, gaming devices, tablets and other internet connected devices which can be found via this link <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

It's important to remember that no filter is ever 100% effective on its own and talking to your child about what to do if they see something that worries or upsets them is key.

DISCUSS YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Creating a family agreement is a brilliant way to think about how your family uses the internet, to help make sure that everybody understands the importance of staying safe and being responsible online. It offers the opportunity for you to set out your expectations regarding technology use in the home, and for your children to let you know their feelings too, if they are old enough to actively participate in the discussion. Involving your children can give them a sense of ownership and responsibility, for the agreement that is made. Points could include daily screen time allowances, where the device is kept at night, approving friend requests, and permission to download or purchase apps.

GIVE PRACTICAL SAFETY TIPS

One of the most important things you can do, before giving technology to your child, is talk to them about it. Having a conversation demonstrates that you are engaged and interested in their online lives and shows you are always available to help them should they need it. Whilst we recommend that parental controls are activated, they are never 100% guaranteed. Your child might also find themselves in a location with unfiltered Wi-Fi, and so knowledge is the best tool they can have.

Giving practical tips for dealing with unwanted content or contact is helpful and can be done as soon as your children start using technology. At the most basic level this could be; "turn the screen off," or, "turn the device over," and, "come and get an adult." If your child is more independent online it could be a case of showing how to take a screenshot, or ensuring they know where to find the blocking and reporting options on each service they are using. Reassuring your child that they can always come to you, or another trusted adult, to ask for help – in any situation and without judgement, is essential. Whatever it is that your child needs help with, try to remain calm. The way you respond will have an impact on your child's experience and may influence how they feel about asking for help in the future.

KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS GOING!

Conversation starters to facilitate these discussions could include:



What Parents Need to Know about SQUID GAME

AGE RESTRICTION
15+
Suitable only for 15 years and over.

With themes of horror and violence, it's important for parents and carers to understand the potential risks posed to young audiences by the nine-episode Netflix-exclusive TV show, Squid Game. The series, rated 15+, is about a world where contestants who are deeply in debt play children's games in order to win cash prizes. The losers, however, are violently killed. The show's popularity has meant it has spread in various guises across online platforms, with a heightened risk of children and young people potentially viewing unsuitable content. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Squid Game is all about.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some might argue that Squid Game contains content that might not even be suitable for older teens, let alone young children. Characters are brutally tortured and killed through stabbings or getting shot as a result of rules developed and enforced by a masked game master. The show also features sexual content and threats of sexual violence, as well as a strong theme of gambling that runs throughout the whole show.

APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst the content is very much adult-themed, some features of the show seem to appeal to young children at face-value. The name "Squid Game" may be interpreted as a programme aimed at children rather than adults. The show's bright and childish aesthetics, may also appeal to young children, particularly as it focuses on playground games to go with it.

SIMILAR CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

When using social media and streaming sites, content is recommended based on what the user has consumed i.e. what they have watched or searched for. Therefore, there is a greater chance of your child being exposed to similar violent or horror-themed content on social media after watching a show like Squid Game.

VIRAL SPIN-OFFS

As well as Netflix, Squid Game has grown in notoriety and prevalence on other platforms, like TikTok and YouTube, with clips of the show going viral. On YouTube Kids, a number of successful channels have taken advantage of the Squid Game trend, creating content such as "How to Draw Squid Game Characters" videos. Its popularity has also led to the creation of app games that put the player in the role of a contestant who is killed if they lose a game.

SCENE RE-ENACTMENTS

Squid Game's pervasive presence on social media has encouraged many content creators to re-enact scenes from the show, which has led to reports of children wanting to also imitate these scenes. Content displayed on social media at home and in school. Much of this content stems from the "Red Light, Green Light" game from the first episode, where contestants attempt to make it past a giant animatronic girl before she shoots them.

Advice for Parents & Carers

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Netflix has easily accessible built-in parental controls that allow you to set up a profile for your child with a specific age rating, block them from watching certain shows and even lock their account so it can't be accessed by anyone else. Netflix also allows you to access your child's viewing history to make sure they're not watching anything inappropriate for their age.

CHECK AGE RATINGS

Age ratings on TV shows and films are a way to gauge what is suitable for audiences of different ages. If you are unsure about the content your child is watching, check the age rating to see if the TV show or film is deemed suitable for their age group. If not, try watching the show yourself or talking to other parents who have seen it before to get a better understanding of why it's been rated a certain way.

MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

Squid Game has become a social media craze and it's possible your child will see some content related to the show on various platforms. Therefore, it's important to be aware of which websites your child has visited on their smartphone, tablet or laptop, and to also keep an eye out for which accounts they are following on social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok.

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Making sure your child is comfortable telling you about what they see online can go a long way to ensuring you are kept in the loop about their online use. Showing an interest in what your child is doing online gives you the opportunity to discuss what is and is not appropriate for their age group, and how they might recognise their own feelings towards content they see.

MONITOR BEHAVIOUR

Due to the viral nature of the show, even if your child has not seen Squid Game, it's important to keep an eye on their behaviour. There have been reports from schools of children "playing Squid Game" in the playground and acting aggressively towards the losers as a way to replicate the consequences of losing in the TV show. Viewing content that makes your child feel uncomfortable could also cause them to feel distressed or distracted, so it's important you can easily spot the signs.

WATCH THE SHOW

If you're trying to figure out whether you should let your child watch Squid Game, it might be a good idea to watch the show yourself first. Doing so will allow you to get a better understanding of the show's content and themes, as well as help you decide if this is something you'd feel comfortable with your child being exposed to.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced and highly respected freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant. Previously the editor of tech tabloid THE INQUIRER, Carly now works as the news editor for Computer Shopper and IT Pro and writes for a number of publications including Forbes, TechRadar, Yes, The Metro, iSwitch and WIRED.



Sources: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/oct/17/english-sound-engine-parents-not-allow-children-to-watch-squid-game>
<https://www.netflix.com/in/home/2641> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1099420/parentalguide?advkey=violence>



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-synching and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

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CENSORED

EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-synching and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be "the next big thing" will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media platforms, TikTok can be extremely addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next means it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase "TikTok coins", which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 99p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts is 'private'. Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'Stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something *does* slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

Meet Our Expert

Parveen Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



SOURCES: www.tiktok.com



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