



SAFEGUARDING

June 2020
ISSUE 5

Welcome to our Parent Safeguarding Newsletter Issue 5

During this difficult time we just wanted to remind you that we are here to support in any way we can.

We hope that you are keeping safe and find the information within our safeguarding newsletter useful and informative. If you have a concern and require any further support please contact our Client Services team clientservices@catmosecollege.com.

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DIGITAL RESILIENCE – WHAT IS IT??

Working with leading experts in this field, and drawing on resilience literature, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety defined digital resilience as -

WHAT IS DIGITAL RESILIENCE?

A child who is digitally resilient will be able to:

Understand when they are at risk online

Know what do to to seek help

Learn from experience

Recover when things go wrong

THIS INVOLVES:

- Recognising potentially risky scenarios.
- Understanding how to deal with them.
- Using these experiences to adapt what they do online in the future.



WHERE TO GO TO GET HELP

CEOP helps keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. We help thousands of children and young people every year, as well as their parents and carers who have been in a similar situation.

(CEOP are unable to respond to reports about bullying, fake accounts or account hacking.)

We are here to help and give you advice, and you can make a report directly to us if something has happened to your child online which has made either you or your child feel unsafe, scared or worried. This might be from someone they know in real life, or someone they have only ever met online.



RESILIENCE TIPS

UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU ARE AT RISK ONLINE

Factfindr: Parent Zone's new service Factfindr brings together young people and experts to talk about the things that matter to them - from knife crime to exam stress to the pressures of lockdown. www.factfindr.org

Thinkuknow: NCA-CEOP's online service Thinkuknow has information and advice for children, parents and carers related to online safety and sexual exploitation. The site is structured so that children can access age-appropriate information, find out how to respond to the issue they're experiencing and, if necessary, contact NCA-CEOP, and it also has worksheets parents can use with their children at home. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childnet Digital Resilience: With links to a lesson plan to help young people aged 11-14 manage their lives online and to help others. www.childnet.com/resources/digital-resilience

Parentzone: The experts in digital family life. www.parentzone.org.uk

LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

We can't change the internet but we can start to demand a better version of it. Creating safe spaces means all of us making use of blocking and reporting tools. All of us choosing services that don't tolerate hateful content and complaining when they do. Childline have information on their website that helps you understand how to block and report harmful and hateful comments and content on all the most popular apps. www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety

RECOVER WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

It's the hardest thing, especially as a parent - what do we do when things go wrong?

As a parent we have these skills already. From the moment you let go of their hands and they take a few tentative steps and fall over flat on their face. We pick them up, give them a cuddle, manage their anxiety and give them the reassurances to try again.

Although that seems simple, we can't mitigate every issue, but we need to support young people by reassurance - talking and understanding and giving them skills to recover, rather than removing the issue (internet) and potentially driving the issue out of your 'radar'. Follow this link for advice on dealing with online bullying. www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/

KNOW WHAT TO DO TO SEEK HELP

For young people - depending on the age of your child there are a range of places they can go for help.

For younger children they can call Childline for help and support, and for older children The Mix offer free and practical advice.

Childline - Call free 0800 1111

The Mix - 0808 808 4994

For parents and carers - The O2 and NSPCC helpline can help you with any questions or concerns you may have about keeping your child safe online.

O2 & NSPCC - 0808 800 5002

For educators or professionals - The Professionals Online Safety Helpline will continue to operate Monday to Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm. This helpline can assist with any online safety issues or concerns any professional working with children and young people may have. For help and support, please email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

FOR AGE SPECIFIC RESOURCES FOLLOW THE BELOW LINK

www.internetmatters.org/resources/digital-resilience-toolkit/

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

Guidance from www.gov.uk

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends during this period, the government recognises many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ONLINE GROOMING



Online Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional relationship with a child and communicates with them through the internet with the intent to commit a sexual offence. This type of victimisation can take place across any platform; from social media and messaging apps to online gaming and live streaming. Often it involves young people being tricked, forced or pressured into doing something they wouldn't normally do (coercion) and often the groomer's goal is to meet the victim in a controlled setting to sexually or physically abuse them. In some cases children may be abducted or have long-lasting psychological damage.

CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE

Unsurprisingly children are often most at risk as they are easy to target and unlikely to question the person who is engaging in conversation with them.

Groomers will use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate them from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. Predators will stalk apps and websites that are popular with young people and will use a 'scattergun' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chances of success.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Online predators will use emotive language and aim to form close, trusted bonds with their victims through showering them with compliments and making them feel good about themselves. Often victims will refer to them as their 'boyfriends' or 'girlfriends' and it can be difficult to convince some young people that they have been groomed, often leading to lasting psychological effects.

LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS

Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, dares or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'likes' or even money for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, all have live streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Live.me, BIGO Live, YouNow and many more.

FROM OPEN TO CLOSED MESSAGES

Online predators may contact their victims using any number of ways including social media, forums, chat rooms, gaming communities or live streaming apps. Sometimes there is little need to develop a 'friendship / rapport stage', as the victim has already shared personal information online and is communicating openly with others. Children may also be prepared to add other online users they don't know so well to gain 'online credibility' through increasing their friends list. Predators will often seize this opportunity to slowly build a relationship and then move their conversation with the child to a more secure and private area, such as through direct messaging.

ANYONE CAN BE A PREDATOR

The internet has made the ability to interact with strangers online easy. Many sites and apps are reliant on individual users entering their own information when signing up.

However individuals can remain anonymous if they choose to enter inaccurate information and many online predator cases are due to groomers using impersonation techniques. However, often the greater threat comes from adults who 'hide in plain sight', choosing to befriend young children without hiding their real identity. Children aged 11 and 12 were reportedly targeted by men exposing themselves back in 2017. Outside of their close friendship group, it's also important to note that friends of friends can also connect with your child via the app, which may include people with this intention.

CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT

Unfortunately, most children find the 'grooming' process (before any meeting) an enjoyable one as the predator will compliment, encourage, and flatter them to gain their trust, friendship and curiosity – 'a wolf in sheep's clothing' scenario. This often means children fail to disclose or report what is happening. If the groomer is also previously known to the child, their family and their friends, then this can make detection even harder.



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SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child on a regular basis about what they do online. By talking openly with them about online relationships, they can quickly ascertain the kind of behaviour which is appropriate or inappropriate. Ask them whether they have any online friends or if they play online games with people they haven't met. This could then open up conversations about the subject of grooming.



CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

In order to give your child a safer online experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they use. Disable location sharing if you can. If you use location-sharing apps to check where your child is, remember that these could always be used by strangers to follow your child without their knowledge. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.

MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE-STREAMING USE

It's important to be aware of what your child is sharing on social media and with whom. Create your own profile and become "friends" with them or follow them so that you can monitor their activity. Similarly, always check on them if they are live streaming and implement privacy controls. Choose a generic screen name and profile picture that hides their identity. You may also feel more comfortable being present each time they live stream.



STICK TO 'TRUE FRIENDS'

Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with people who they do know. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as close family and friends. Remind them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know they can talk to you if someone does something they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.



DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to detect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will pay your child compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may admire how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS

Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns and advise parents to look out for:

- Secretive online behaviour.
- Late night internet or smartphone usage.
- Meeting new friends in unusual places.
- Becoming clingy, develop sleeping or eating problems or even bedwetting.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, unexplainably.
- Seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.



**National
Online
Safety®**

A GUIDE ON HOW NOT TO BE A SCREEN ZOMBIE

It's not always easy to tell if you've been spending too much time on your device. Mobile phones, tablets, games consoles, TVs; the list of devices you might have access to seems never-ending and switching between them can be seamless. However, too much time on your device could lead to certain problems and could be an indicator of an addictive habit. It's important therefore that you try and manage your screen time as much as possible and avoid becoming a 'screen zombie.'

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN

Spending too much time on social media watching YouTube or playing games online can result in you becoming a screen zombie. This can affect your mood, how much sleep you get, how you perform at school and how you perform at school and how you behave around others. Limiting your screen time will keep you alert, keep your mind focused and help to look after your own mental health and wellbeing.

DON'T GET TRAPPED INSIDE

Screen zombies usually find that they spend a lot of time inside as they lose interest in other things that don't include their device. It might seem obvious, but meeting your friends outside or doing outdoor activities like playing sports, trampolining, camping or just going for a walk are all healthy replacements for screen time and can help keep your mind fresh and active.

BEWARE OF SNEAKY TRICKS

A lot of apps and games use certain ways of keeping you online and using their platform for long periods of time. This can include simple things like unlimited scrolling on a newsfeed, 'streaks' or uncovering hidden levels. Be mindful of how much time you're online and try to remember you're in control. You decide when you've had enough, not your device.

BE PRESENT, NOT A ZOMBIE

Screen zombies often find that they spend a lot of time alone in front of their tablet or their mobile phone and reduce the time they spend with their friends or talk with their family. Zombies often lack communication skills. Always try to limit your screen time as much as possible – there's so much fun you can have with others!

BEWARE OF OTHER DANGERS

Spending too much time on your device and online can increase your chances of potentially encountering other online dangers. This could range from viewing inappropriate or harmful content to inline bullying, grooming or fake news. Controlling how much time you spend online will reduce your risk of exposure. If you do see anything that makes you upset or if you're concerned about contact with others, always report it to a trusted adult.

SAVE YOUR PARENTS

Even though your parents will often be the ones telling you to limit your screen time, turn off your tablet or switch off your phone, sometimes they will forget to take their own advice. So it's up to you to make sure you remind them of the dangers of becoming a screen zombie!

SCREEN FREE BEDROOMS

Keeping your phone in your bedroom means that it can be tempting to check every notification you get. Your phone could be the last thing you see at night and the first thing you see in the morning. This can contribute towards poor sleep and a lack of focus the next day. Try to keep your phone out of your bedroom or turn off all notifications before bedtime. This will mean you'll get a good night's rest and be ready for the next day.

ZOMBIE FREE MEALTIMES

Mealtimes can be seen as a good time to sit down, relax and switch on your tablet or phone as you eat your food. But it can also mean that you're not interacting with others, sharing jokes at the dinner table or just talking about your day. Keep mealtimes for family time. Eating your food and staring at a screen means you're turning into a zombie.

UN-ZOMBIFY YOURSELF

If you think that you're already become a screen zombie, then don't worry, it's never too late to get help and support from your friends and family. Talk to your parents if you feel you've become addicted to your device, try to understand why and work with them to help you limit your screen time so that you can leave your zombie character behind.