



November Safeguarding Bulletin

This a bumper edition of the safeguarding bulletin, as there has been a lot of topics in the media that I felt would be of interest to you and your families. As ever, if there are issues that you would like further information about or support with, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the pastoral or safeguarding team.



All of the downloadable guides will be attached to this bulletin.



Recent user numbers for the messaging app Snapchat currently sit at approximately 800 million and figures from data gathering company Statista indicate that roughly 20% of those users are under 18 . That's a lot of young people participating in this sprawling social media platform, many of whom are potentially unaware of the associated risks.



Findings from the Money and Pensions Service have found that only 47% of children in the UK have received a meaningful financial education . Money management is a vital part of being an adult, and an exceptionally important skill that will benefit children for their entire lives. Having the knowledge and self-control to let savings build up interest – or avoid an impulse buy can ensure that children go into adulthood at a significantly lower risk of financial difficulty. With Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales fast approaching, now is a great time to help children understand the value of money.

Of course, it can feel daunting when attempting to teach young people about something as complicated as money and responsible budgeting but there are several options at your disposal. To break down these options, we've put together this guide in collaboration with financial education app GoHenry, helping you teach children and young people all they need to know about spending and saving.



Anti-Bullying Week, and this year's theme is "Choose Respect". Statistics from this week's experts – the Anti-Bullying Alliance – reveal that 40% of children in the UK have suffered some form of bullying within the last year, with the most common experience being name-calling and verbal abuse. While it can have several causes, this kind of behaviour is commonly seen when a disagreement between two youngsters gets out of hand and emotions take over .

Many children are still learning how to conduct themselves, and it can be difficult for them to know how to act when faced with someone who disagrees with them, or otherwise find themselves in conflict with another person . It can also be tricky for parents and educators to teach them how to resolve disputes in a mature and healthy manner. By teaming up with the ABA for Anti-Bullying Week, we're bringing you expert advice on encouraging children to choose respect.

Making a mistake isn't the end of the world, but that can be a difficult thing to learn for a lot of people. Most children are still learning it, in fact. These kinds of setbacks 🗨️ and the feelings they bring on 😡 can provoke severe and unhealthy reactions in young people, if they're not taught how to deal with their emotions in a healthy way.

However, it's sometimes tricky to know what you can do or say to help these youngsters develop the confidence and adaptability to process these feelings in the future 😊 That's why we've put together this guide featuring expert advice, letting you know how to build emotional resilience in the children and young people in your care.



AI Harms on the Rise

I doubt it will come as any surprise that the increased availability of Generative AI (GenAI), especially image/video AI models, means that the potential harms to children and young people is on the increase. Some of these models have no or very limited guardrails in place which would prevent the creation of highly inappropriate and illegal images and videos. Some examples of this would be:

- Offenders taking innocent screenshots (e.g. a portrait) from somebody's social media feed and creating CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material).
- In some cases, this is created to order, in other words one offender will pay another offender to create a series of images.
- Increasingly this tactic is being used to blackmail/extort young people: create an indecent image of that person, threaten to share with friends unless they pay a sum of money.
- Offenders are also using AI to create an online persona, e.g. a social media account pretending to be a young person/child (i.e. catfishing).

This and much more are not new, these tactics have been around for a long time, but it is the use of GenAI which is making it much easier for people to pretend to be others and create lifelike/realistic imagery.

Violent content on social media deters teens from going out

[The Guardian](#)

A new study by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) has revealed that a quarter of teenagers who have been exposed to footage of real-life violence on social media, ranging from fist fights to stabbings and gang violence, are being served the clips automatically by the platforms' algorithms, with only a minority actively searching for such content. The survey of more than 10,000 young people found that eight out of 10 felt less safe in their local area after seeing clips involving weapons, with two thirds saying such content made them less likely to go out. YEF chief executive Jon Yates said: "Anyone working for TikTok or X should feel ashamed reading this. You should feel guilty - and then you should turn that into action and do something about it."

Watchdog must be 'more assertive' on protecting children

[Sky News](#)

Science Secretary Peter Kyle has called on telecoms regulator Ofcom to be "more assertive" when handling "grotesque" behaviour on social media and protecting children from harmful content, such as content linked to cosmetic surgery and eating disorders. Mr Kyle has said that the Government will require social media companies to "bake safety in from the outset", with new research to look into the effects of smartphones and social media on children to inform potential future measures. "I don't want to go to things like blanket bans because I want people to benefit from all of the opportunities presented by modern technology", he said, but "where there are harms, I will keep everything on the table when it comes to keeping people safe."

Health professionals call for new guidance on screen time

[The Sunday Telegraph](#)

A group of dozens of health professionals, including paediatricians, psychologists, public health experts and GPs, has written to the chief medical officer, Professor Sir Chris Whitty, to call for the Government's official advice on screen time to be urgently updated. The current advice was published in 2019, and the group says there has since been "substantial" evidence that excessive screen time and use of social media are linked to a range of issues in children, from mental health issues to problems with sleep, eyesight, speech, language development and body image. "As clinicians", they write, "we witness these harmful effects daily, and academics are now establishing causal connections."

Children with SEND at greater risk of exploitation

[The Guardian](#)

A study conducted by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Portsmouth, funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, has found that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are at particular risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. The study found that a "high proportion" of the 7,432 cases referred to the national referral mechanism last year involved children with SEND, and the study noted that with long waits for assessments, many such children do not have education, health and care plans in place, and are more likely to be excluded from school, socially isolating them and leaving them vulnerable to criminal gangs and sexual predators.

Young Carers: Who are They and Why do They Need Support? - Action for Children

A young carer is someone 18 years old or under who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. This could be a parent or a sibling. Some children begin giving care from a very young age, and others become carers overnight. Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying, and stressful. For young carers, this can negatively impact their experience in education. Over a quarter of young carers aged 11-15 regularly miss school. This can have a lasting effect on their life chances. Action for Children have written an excellent article on this vital issue. If interested, please click on the link below:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/young-carers-who-are-they-and-how-are-they-impacted/>

Roblox Tightens Safety Measures

Roblox, one of the most popular games around the world, has been under a lot of fire lately for a whole host of reasons, such as highly inappropriate games accessible to young children, questionable moderation, significant grooming concerns and more.

At its most basic, Roblox is a platform where any user can create games and one of the biggest concerns is that none of these user-generated games have required an age rating system. That's about to change, from mid-December creators will have to content-rate their games. Whilst a positive step it still raises lots of questions, including:

- Is anyone checking these ratings?
- What about games prior to mid-December?
- Will there be enhanced moderation?

It's a positive step forward but much more needs to be done by Roblox and other platforms to help parents with keeping their children safe. You can read more about the concerns and the steps which Roblox are taking [HERE](#).

Sextortion on the Rise

I'm sure it won't come as a surprise to anyone that the vile crime of sextortion, where a person is coerced into sharing an indecent image then blackmailed, is on the rise worldwide. You've only got to see the [recent case](#) of Andrew McCartney to understand how prolific this can be.

Not only is the rise in relation to traditional methods, but AI-enabled sextortion is on the increase, albeit at a thankfully much lower level (that we know of) where a person doesn't even need to share an indecent image, it is created by AI. Furthermore we are now seeing this (again in very low numbers) with users aged from 11 years upwards.

It is vital that staff, parents, carers and students are aware of what this crime is and what to do about it. Leaving this until the child is 14/15 years of age is much too late, it needs to start in Primary.

To understand what it is, recognising warning signs, what to do and more, the Internet Watch Foundation have put together a great information page which would be useful to both staff and parents [HERE](#).

Under-16s could lose social media access

[thenational.scot](https://www.thenational.scot)

The UK Government is considering a ban on social media for under-16s if tech companies fail to protect children adequately. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle stated that "everything is on the table" regarding regulations to ensure online safety. The upcoming Online Safety Act, effective from 2025, will impose new duties on social media platforms to safeguard users, particularly children, from harmful content. Kyle emphasised the need for Ofcom to adopt a "safety by design" approach and to be agile in regulating emerging threats, including AI. Ian Russell from the Molly Rose Foundation highlighted the importance of these new priorities, calling them a "course correction" for the Online Safety Act. Maria Neophytou from the NSPCC echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for transparency from tech companies regarding online harms. The Government aims to create safer online environments for children, with Ofcom tasked to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures.

School imposes smartphone ban for Year 7 students

[The Times](#)

In response to the growing concerns over smartphone usage among students, Mike Baxter, principal of City of London Academy Southwark, has announced a complete ban on smartphones for Year 7 students starting September 2025. This decision follows the implementation of tighter rules earlier this term, where phones were required to be off and stored in pouches during school hours. Baxter noted: "If we are serious about the mental health of our children, I can think of nothing more powerful than an outright ban in schools." The initiative aims to protect students from age-inappropriate content and excessive screen time while encouraging families to consider less harmful brick phones.

Parents struggle with online safety

[Express.co.uk](#)

Research reveals that 70% of parents do not fully understand their teenagers' online activities, making it difficult for them to provide appropriate advice on safety. The survey, which involved 1,000 parents of 13-19 year olds, found that 46% struggle to discuss online safety due to fears of giving incorrect guidance. Valiant Richey, global head of outreach and partnerships at TikTok, said: "Better awareness of the online world allows parents to have open conversations about what is appropriate and what isn't." While 61% of parents have made efforts to become more tech-savvy, 64% still find it challenging to keep up with online trends. The Digital Safety Partnership aims to empower families to foster safe online practices and encourage open discussions about digital wellbeing. Richey added: "Our goal is to make everyone feel safe and empowered online."

Surge in online child crimes

[The Star](#)

Online crimes against children in South Yorkshire have surged by 28% since 2020, with reports rising from 1,130 in 2021 to 1,489 in 2023. Detective Chief Inspector Gary Magnay highlighted the growing concern, stating: "Online child abuse is a growing concern nationally as more and more children lead more technologically-enabled lives." The most prevalent offence reported was stalking and harassment, accounting for over half of the cases. In response, South Yorkshire Police conducted Operation Spring Bravo, resulting in 17 arrests and the safeguarding of 47 children. The NSPCC has also reported a record high in online grooming offences, urging the UK government for stricter legislation. Their data indicates a staggering 89% increase in sexual communication with a child offences since 2017/18.

Children face climate crisis consequences

[The Guardian](#)

A new report from UNICEF highlights the alarming impact of climate change on children, predicting that by the 2050s, eight times more children will endure extreme heatwaves and three times more will face river floods compared to the 2000s. Catherine Russell, UNICEF's executive director, said: "Children are experiencing a myriad of crises, from climate shocks to online dangers, and these are set to intensify in the years to come." The report underscores that nearly 1bn children live in high-risk areas for environmental disasters, with rising temperatures increasing disease vulnerability and mental health issues. The educational impacts of climate change are also severe, with over 400m students affected by school closures since 2022 due to extreme weather. Russell emphasised the urgent need for world leaders to adhere to climate commitments to protect future generations.

For Parents - Fortnite Updated Controls

With the Fortnite game as popular as it ever was, it's important that parents of children who play the game are updated on parental controls which will assist. There are quite a few features within Fortnite which may appear overwhelming so Internet Matters have put together a fantastic web page to guide parents through all the controls/settings.

You can find the web page [HERE](#).

Youth club closures lead to delinquency

[The Times](#)

The closure of youth clubs has detrimental effects on teenagers' GCSE performance and increases their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities, according to a report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The study revealed that teenagers from deprived backgrounds achieved, on average, a full grade lower in their GCSEs after local youth clubs closed. Furthermore, these individuals were 14% more likely to become involved in crime within six years of a closure. The IFS highlighted that youth clubs provided essential support and activities, which contributed positively to both academic performance and social behaviour. Pepe Di'lasio, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, emphasised the importance of youth clubs: "The cuts to local authority funding over the last decade have been hugely damaging for children and young people." The report estimates that for every £1 saved from closing youth clubs, the societal cost is nearly £3.

Government could back new restrictions on social media

[Daily Mail](#) [The Times](#)

The *Times* reports that the Government is considering throwing its weight behind a Private Members' Bill proposed by Labour MP Josh McAlister, who is calling for an increase in the age from which social media and tech firms can collect data on children. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle, the paper adds, is also understood to be paying close attention to moves by the Australian Government to banning under-16s from social media sites and apps. A Government source tells the paper that McAlister's proposals have "quite a lot of support", and while he is unlikely "to get 100% of what he wants ... it's clearly something parents care about. It's a ripe area and it's not just a kind of middle-class mum's concern, it's across the country."

Ofcom warns on chatbot content

[The Guardian](#)

Ofcom has issued a warning to tech companies regarding user-generated content from chatbots, saying it may violate the UK's Online Safety Act. This guidance follows "distressing incidents," including cases where avatars mimicked deceased individuals, such as Brianna Ghey and Molly Russell. Ofcom clarified that platforms allowing users to create chatbots that imitate real or fictional personas are subject to the act. Companies failing to comply could face fines of up to £18m or 10% of their global turnover. Ben Packer from Linklaters observed: "The fact that Ofcom has had to clarify that these services may be in scope reflects the vast breadth and sheer complexity of the Online Safety Act." The new regulations aim to protect users, especially children, from harmful content.

Twice as many children report gambling problems

[The Guardian](#)

New figures from the Gambling Commission have revealed that the number of children classified as having a gambling problem has more than doubled in a year. The watchdog found that around a quarter of those aged 11-17 have gambled using their own money in the past year, with a "significant increase" in the number gambling at licensed bookmakers or placing bets online using family accounts, while the proportion of young people with a gambling problem rose from 0.7% to 1.5%, equivalent to around 85,000 young people. Former Conservative leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith warned that gambling firms "are completely out of control and seem to be going after young people", while a spokesperson said the Government is "absolutely committed to strengthening protections for those at risk, including young people".

Snapchat tops child grooming cases

[The Times](#)

According to the NSPCC, Snapchat is the most prevalent platform in child grooming cases, involved in 48% of recorded incidents. The charity analysed data from 45 police forces, revealing 7,000 offences of "sexual communication with a child" in 2023-24, with Snapchat linked to 875 cases. Jess Phillips, the minister for safeguarding, said: "Social media companies have a responsibility to stop this vile abuse from happening." The NSPCC is calling on Ofcom to enhance regulations under the Online Safety Act to better protect children. Sir Peter Wanless, chief executive of the NSPCC, emphasised the need for tech companies to ensure their platforms are safe for children, adding: "One year since the Online Safety Act became law and we are still waiting for tech companies to make their platforms safe for children." Snapchat has expressed a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and takes action against offenders.

Emma Willis reveals phone detox struggles

[London Evening Standard](#)

Emma Willis participated in a Channel 4 experiment where she, along with Year 8 pupils from The Stanway School in Essex, gave up smartphones for 21 days. She described her experience as one filled with "withdrawal and anxiety," saying: "I was very naive going into it." Initially, she felt out of control without her phone, which she noted is "designed to keep you looking and scrolling." However, after overcoming the initial challenges, she found the experience liberating and chose to continue using a basic phone for a few days post-experiment. The show, titled *Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones*, will showcase the findings from researchers at the University of York regarding the behaviour of the participating students. The Department for Education has also provided guidance on mobile phone usage in schools, while discussions continue about raising the age of digital consent.

Government to consult on playground vaping and smoking ban

[Daily Express](#) | [London Evening Standard](#)

Health Secretary Wes Streeting has confirmed that the Government is proposing, and will consult on, a ban on smoking and vaping in playgrounds and outside schools as part of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, as part of "a wider package to clamp down on the scourge of youth vaping, which will include licensing for retailers, enforcement and also clamping down on the marketing and vaping and advertising and packaging and flavours of vapes to kids". Mr Streeting said the Bill is "also about the marketing, the packaging, the flavours of vapes – this is a cynical industry that has sought to addict a new generation of children to nicotine".

Obesity a growing issue for reception-age children

[/ London Evening Standard](#) [The Daily Telegraph](#) [The Guardian](#) [The Times](#)

New data published by NHS England has revealed that 9.6% of reception-age children were obese in 2023/24, up from 9.2% the previous year, while the 30 specialist clinics providing support for children with health complications related to severe obesity are now treating children as young as two years old. The proportion of obese children in year 6, aged 10 to 11, fell slightly, however, from 22.7% to 22.1%. The Local Government Association has called for the tax on sugary soft drinks to be extended to cover other high-sugar food and drink, with the revenue raised to be directed to areas with higher levels of deprivation, child obesity, and poor dental health.

Online Parenting Courses - Family Lives

Being a parent has never been easy. There are no manuals for it, and previous generations may not be able to provide the insight you're looking for. The family unit is more dispersed than ever, with some families existing hundreds of miles from what may be called a 'core unit'. The rapid pace of societal change in the UK rapidly outstrips the knowledge of the immediate past. The result is that many parents may find themselves lost in a maelstrom of contradictory advice. For adults, time has never been more compacted. Family Lives has produced a series of online parenting courses, to make this challenge a little easier. If interested please follow the link below:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/online-parenting-courses>

Family Lives offers a confidential and free* helpline service for families in England and Wales (previously known as Parentline). They can be contacted on **0808 800 2222** for emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. Their website is also a rich source of useful support and advice.

(* Free from landlines and most mobiles)

This is a full article based purely on County lines, Gangs, Grooming and recruitment – a lot to read but a very interesting piece.

County Lines: Strategic Threat Report (NPCC and NCLCC, November 2024)

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) has published its strategic threat report about county lines based on data from April 2023 to March 2024.

Organised Crime Groups

There are 1,447 Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) linked to County Lines, with the numbers of new OCGs and individuals linked remaining steady. OCGs drug activity is predominantly crack cocaine and heroin supply, with 87% of drug lines supplying these drugs. The main lines are run out of London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester. Demand for heroin and crack cocaine remains strong.

Key Findings

Key findings from the report indicate that county lines have become more localised, seeing a tripling of the number of lines that start and finish within the same police area. This means that drug runners, often teenagers, are travelling shorter distances and when found are usually in a different area of their city. It is likely that recruitment of children, often via social media, will also become more localised.

Missing Children

Criminally exploited young people are often identified after episodes of going missing, particularly over several days. Where drug delivery journeys are shorter, exploited children may be running lines without necessarily being 'missing' for long periods of time, making identification harder. Most exploited children were missing from home (61%), but 16% of the total were missing from a care home. Seventy per cent of children were recorded as missing on multiple occasions; on average 18 times.

Dangers of Drug Running

Drug running is the most dangerous part of the county line operation as they are carrying valuable cash and drugs. They also find themselves involved at the frontline of violent conflict with other lines, typically over territory. Children are frequently used to launder the proceeds of organised crime through their bank accounts which will be controlled by the gang. The threat of mental, physical and sexual abuse is constant.

Fewer Children Involved

Although the police have recorded 10% fewer children being involved in county lines, they are still an important part of the drug distribution business model. Exploited children are mostly boys (93%) aged 15 - 17 (80%); although under-14s (20%) can be involved too. The true number of children involved in county lines will be much higher than police data. A 2019 study by the Children's Commissioner, Keeping Kids Safe (<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/keeping-kids-safe/>), reported that 27,000 children were involved, but that only a quarter were known to agencies.

Grooming Process

Children are groomed with promise of money and gifts before being trapped into the day to day delivery of drugs. The most prevalent tactic to maintain control is debt bondage. Typically, this means the child being robbed (usually by someone in the criminal gang unknown to the victim) and then being held responsible for the loss of drugs or cash (or both). In 2024, police found evidence for the first time of these debts being sold on to another criminal gang.

Key Indicators

A key indicator of child exploitation is being missing from home. Other factors which increase vulnerability include:

- living in an area of deprivation or poverty
- experiencing parental substance misuse
- having poor mental health
- being known to children's services or having looked-after status
- being excluded from school

Partners

To better protect children from serious harm, the police work in partnership with specialist support providers such as Catch22 (<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/>), Missing Persons SafeCall (<https://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/safecall-service/>) and Barnardo's (<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/criminal-exploitation-children>).

Cuckooing

About half of county lines use cuckooed properties where the gang takes over and controls the householder's property, typically a vulnerable adult, to facilitate crime, manufacture or cultivate drugs, store weapons or sell drugs. There has been an increase in the sharing on social media of videos taken of the vulnerable adult being bullied, abused, demeaned or assaulted.

Advertising

The majority of county lines advertise and respond to customers purchasing crack cocaine and heroin using 'simple' 'burner or graft' mobiles (which can only make calls or texts). Online drug markets using social media is more often used for cocaine, cannabis, MDMA and ketamine, with delivery to the end-user through the postal network.

Links

Download the County Lines: Strategic Threat Report here: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/county-lines-are-changing-to-become-more-localised-reveals-new-county-lines-strategic-threat-risk-assessment>

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO CHOOSE RESPECT

Sometimes, differences between children can escalate into bullying, potentially impacting their mental health in a way that can persist into adulthood. While it's natural to disagree sometimes, teaching children the importance of respect is essential – especially in difficult situations. This guide provides strategies for encouraging considerate behaviour, even during a dispute, to foster a kinder, more inclusive environment for everyone.

1 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

As adults, we play a crucial role in modelling respectful behaviour for children: they observe and learn from our actions every day. Be mindful of the way you interact with others in front of children. Keep in mind that you should always approach others with an attitude of mutual respect, even if you disagree with them. Demonstrating this behaviour can influence young people and help them to handle their own conflicts in a healthy way.

2 AGREE TO DISAGREE

Make sure children know that it's fine to have differing opinions – and that disagreeing with someone doesn't mean you can't get along or respect each other's point of view. Help them understand that sometimes we can 'agree to disagree'. Using active listening skills when doing this can also help to build empathy and understanding of others.

3 PROMOTE ACTIVE LISTENING

Teach children about the importance of active listening: that is, making a genuine effort to listen to the other person's perspective without interrupting, before responding in a way that shows you understand their viewpoint, even (or perhaps especially) if you disagree with it. This makes people feel respected and allows for a better comprehension of their point of view, which in turn can make it easier for you to communicate your own opinions to them.

4 ENCOURAGE THE USE OF "I" STATEMENTS

If a child finds themselves in a disagreement with someone, it can be useful to encourage them to use "I" statements during the discussion. Framing their thoughts and feelings using statements like "I feel ..." or "I think ..." can help them avoid an accusatory tone and encourages them to take responsibility for their own emotions.

5 FOCUS ON BEHAVIOUR, NOT CHARACTER

When disagreements happen, encourage children to focus on critiquing and addressing the specific actions or behaviours that caused this upset, rather than attacking the person's character. For example, "I didn't like how you interrupted me" is better than "You're so rude". This can help children avoid hurting someone's feelings, which is likely to inflame the situation.

6 STAY CALM AND TAKE BREAKS

It's perfectly normal to feel upset during a disagreement – especially if it's getting heated. Remind children that if they feel overwhelmed, they should try to take deep breaths or even go for a short break to help them stay composed. If a conversation becomes too intense, remind them it's OK to suggest continuing it later or in a different setting. This can prevent things getting out of hand, allowing cooler heads to prevail.

7 START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESPECT

Talk openly to children about what respect means – to you and to them. Discuss how they might show respect to each other, to friends, to strangers and even to people we might disagree with. You could use examples of considerate or inconsiderate behaviour in books, films or TV to open discussions about the importance of giving others due regard.

8 SEEK COMMON GROUND

When a disagreement has occurred between children, they may find it hard to move past it. You can support them in finding a more positive way forward by helping identify areas of agreement or common ground with the other party. This can help to build bridges between differing opinions and foster a more cooperative atmosphere, as well as preventing those involved from demonising each another.

9 AVOID MAKING THINGS PERSONAL

It's important that we make it clear to children they must avoid name-calling, swearing or derogatory remarks in a disagreement with others. Respectful language sets a positive tone and helps keep the conversation productive. Reminding children to stay calm and take breaks – as mentioned previously – can help them avoid getting too emotional and saying or doing something hurtful.

10 REFLECT AND LEARN

After a child has had a disagreement, encourage them to reflect on the experience and think about what they can learn from it. What did they handle well? How might they improve their communication skills to handle conflicts more effectively in the future? You could use role play, writing and drawing pictures, or hypothetical examples to further develop their skills in showing respect during a disagreement.

Meet Our Expert

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) co-ordinate Anti-Bullying Week each year. ABA is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve their vision to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. They welcome membership from any organisation or individual that supports this vision and support a free network of thousands of schools and colleges.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/choose-respect>

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION

13+

Snapchat is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent 'disappears' 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

SNAP STREAK

97

DAYS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have naked photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's own research found that 65% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'SnapMaps' – a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has a hidden photo vault called 'My Eyes Only'. Teens can conceal sensitive photos and videos from parents and carers in this folder, which is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two playing cards. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, stories and the My Eyes Only folder.

SCREEN TIME ADDICTION

Snapchat prioritises user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). The app also has sections called 'Discover' and 'Spotlight', which show tailored content to each user. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn'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 to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

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 in younger 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.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Centre' lets you view the details of the child's account – their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You must invite a child to the Family Centre for them to join. To keep the child's location hidden on the app, go into settings and turn on 'Ghost Mode' and 'Hide Live Location', and ensure they know not to share their location with anyone.

BLOCK AND REPORT

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

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF

Before you allow a child to download Snapchat, download it yourself and familiarise yourself with the app. Snapchat has produced a parents' guide to the app to help you understand how it works and any protections they have in place. A link for this can be found in the sources below.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how reliable they are. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

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.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators EDUCATING CHILDREN ON SPENDING AND SAVING

Evidence shows that children's spending habits begin to form as early as seven years old. With primary schools in England not required to teach financial literacy, many young people are reaching adulthood without knowing the basics of budgeting. This guide explains how to teach young people about money in a practical way, giving them the understanding to become savvy spenders and savers.

1 PROVIDE POCKET MONEY

Giving children money – even a small amount – can help them learn to make their own budgeting decisions about how to spend or save it. Research shows that youngsters who receive pocket money are more likely to become adults with strong financial skills and significantly less debt.

2 USE A PREPAID CARD

Being able to pay by card is essential these days, with some retailers not accepting cash since the pandemic. Prepaid debit cards are available for children from the age of six, allowing them to get used to spending like they will as adults with no risk of dipping into an overdraft. Learning about money is like learning to swim – you need to get in the pool and have a go!

3 PRACTISE BORROWING

Although official borrowing is only available to over 18s, kids need to understand how debt and interest works before they become adults and are exposed to credit cards or 'buy now, pay later' schemes. For a safe means of teaching them about this, parents could offer them extra pocket money but explain that it needs to be paid back by a certain date, plus an extra couple of pounds as interest.

4 ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATION

Chatting about money and how much things cost will teach children that finance is a part of everyday life and not some "scary adult thing". Parents can involve them in budgeting for the weekly shop, for example, working together to get everything on the list while keeping the total below a certain number. Letting young ones make spending decisions in a safe space can build up their confidence regarding money.

5 DISCUSS THE PRESSURE TO SPEND

Whether it's YouTube ads or a hint of envy at a friend's recent purchase, spending triggers are everywhere. Encourage children to notice how clever shop design (like placing sweets at the checkout) and offers such as '2 for 1' deals entice us to spend more. Challenge them to resist impulse buys by getting them to sleep on it before deciding to spend.

6 TELLING 'NEED' FROM 'WANT'

Learning how to prioritise spending is an important life skill: the difference between life's essentials and "nice to haves" is key to budgeting. If children pester you for treats while shopping, it's the perfect time to say "That's a want. We're getting our needs first." You could show how you budget for food, electricity and so on before buying fun things.

7 ENCOURAGE SAVING

Getting children saving early can set them up with a useful habit for their adult life. Suggest that they set something aside every time they receive money and help them set a target for how much to put away, so they feel motivated to continue. For example, encouraging them to save for a friend's birthday gift can get children much more invested in what they buy.

8 SPARK INTEREST IN INTEREST

Motivate children by telling them about interest; you can describe it as a reward for saving money. Explain how everything they put away will grow over time. As an exciting example, explain that 1p doubled every day for a month would amount to approximately £10 million. Some prepaid cards for young people also offer interest; parents and carers could also add a little to supplement what their child saves and show how it works.

9 PAYING FOR CHORES

This is a complex debate with no right or wrong answer: it depends on what works for each individual family. However, it can be one of the best ways to teach children that money needs to be earned and helps to create more mindful spenders. If parents aren't keen on paying for everyday chores, they could ask the children to suggest their own ideas for earning a little extra.

10 PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SCAMS

Scams are a terrifyingly easy way to lose money, and children are generally more likely to be taken in due to a lack of experience with these financial criminals. As a minimum, make sure they're aware of the most common scams they could be exposed to – by text, email and phone, for instance. Young people should tell a trusted adult about any unexpected message or call and never give out their personal information.

Meet Our Expert

GoHenry is a prepaid debit card and financial education app with a mission to make every young person smart with money. Co-founder and CEO Louise Hill is a passionate campaigner for better financial literacy among school children and strongly believes that money management is a crucial life skill.

