

Ref/Com/Gen/Leadership/JMC/KeepingChildrenSafeOnline2026

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Dear Parent/Carer

RE: KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

The internet and technology are key parts of everyday life. With access at our fingertips, it can be even more challenging to keep children and young people safe online, especially when they have their own computers, smartphones, tablets and games consoles. There are many positives for everyone but there are also risks. Just like adults, young people can also get into trouble with the law regarding their conduct online. It is important for parents/carers to understand how their children can get into trouble online, what the warning signs are, how to respond and where to get help.

Parents/carers should make their child aware that they could be committing criminal offences if they post or share anything online that is hateful, harmful, threatening, misogynistic, or grossly offensive. This includes messages, images and voice notes using mobile phones or other electronic devices such as PCs, laptops, tablets, and online gaming chat functions. They may also commit criminal offences if they conduct themselves in such a manner face-to-face.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to communicate with those in their care about keeping safe online and engaging positively with social media. Regularly talking to children about safe and appropriate online engagement and encouraging children to discuss anything concerning they may see, is key to keeping children safe. Children and young people should be encouraged to speak up, and let a trusted adult know if they encounter content online or social media that they feel is inappropriate, or 'just doesn't feel right'.

As a parent or carer, it is important to educate yourself your child(ren) that, as well as the endless opportunities available through the internet and technology, there are also associated risks to be aware of.

Potential online risks can include:

- Access and exposure to inappropriate/disturbing images and content
- Access and exposure to racist or hate material
- Sexual grooming, luring, abuse and exploitation by/with strangers
- Sharing personal information with strangers that could identify and locate a child offline
- Online bullying (cyber bullying) by peers and people they consider their 'friends'
- Being encouraged take part in violent behaviour.

- Sending or receiving sexually explicit films, images or messages of themselves or others (known as 'sexting' when sent by mobile phone)
- Glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- Physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk-taking activities
- Leaving and running away from home because of contacts made online
- Using Emoji's to communicate in an inappropriate way.

The following links offer further advice and information:

- CEOP - <https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/>
- Barnardo's Online Safety - https://www.barnardos.org.uk/blog/online-safety-parents-questions?gclid=EAlalQobChMI_Z_w6f37_QIVumDmCh0IWwo5EAAYASAAEgKObfD_BwE
- NSPCC Online Safety- www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- National Online Safety - <https://www.getsafeonline.org/personal/article-category/safeguarding-children/>

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

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