



# Online Safety and Social Media Awareness

# Aims

- How and why children and young people use social media
- The impact of lockdown on interaction online
- Risks children and young people may encounter online:
  - bullying, ‘trolling’
  - harmful content online (‘bait out’)
  - sharing personal content and sexting ( ‘only fan page’)
  - online grooming
- Talking at home and staying safe
- Where to go for more information and support

# Setting the digital scene

1. The UK population is 65.1 million, with 92.6% of us actively using the internet.
2. On average UK children have a phone by age seven, an iPad by age eight, and a Smartphone by the age of ten.
3. The average child spends 5 hours a day online.
4. 80% of the time young people spend on social media is on their phone.
5. 75% of children aged 10-12 in the UK have a social media account. This rises to 96% of 13-18 year olds.
6. Average adult in the UK has 3 social media accounts, the average teenager 7.

# Since lockdown?

- During lockdown, children have had no choice but to facilitate 'social' time via a virtual world.
- YouTube is the most popular viewing platform for children & young people.
- Increase in online gaming; (three-quarters of 5–15-year-olds) and most were regularly 'multi-screening'.
- Average 8.40 hours per day.
- Half of 9–16-year-olds in their bedroom away from adult supervision.

# Most popular?

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Gaming – Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft
- Free messaging services e.g. WhatsApp
- Facebook for ‘old people’

# Parental concerns

- sharing personal information;
- sexual, pornographic and violent images;
- some forms of advertising;
- racist, discriminatory or hate-speech material;
- websites advocating unhealthy or dangerous behaviours, such as self-harm, suicide and anorexia;
- online bullying
- grooming; child sexual and criminal exploitation

# Parental Controls

## Internet providers

- Internet providers in the UK provide their customers with free parental controls.
- These providers offer filter levels e.g. provides 'light', 'moderate' or 'strict' filter levels.
- Parents can :
  - customise their parental controls.
  - allow and block specific sites.
  - set filter times.
  - set limits for time online.

## But, there is a downside:

- 57% admit social media distracts them from doing homework
- 54% say it distracts from the people they're with
- 29% are regularly woken at night by a call, text, or notification
- 42% agree that social media takes away from time they could spend with friends in person
- 54% said they'd be a lot more worried if their parents knew exactly what they were doing on online



# Trolling?

- ‘Trolling’ refers to the deliberate inflicting of hatred, bigotry, racism, misogyny, or other forms of targeted abuse online.
- Was known as ‘Flaming’ but if this term is used it is now more likely to mean a single angry exchange, unlike trolling that can intensify over time.
- Trolls often have more than one account.

# Ditch the label survey

39% had a nasty comment posted on their profile, 34% on a photo

68% sent a nasty private message

23% bullied in an online game

24% had private information shared

41% had rumours posted online

27% had photos/videos of them posted that they didn't like

# Body positivity #BoPo #filterdrop

- Focus on health not size or shape
- What the body does not how it looks
- Showcase bodies of all sizes
- ‘Real’ bodies vs. ‘edited’ bodies
- Self-compassion quotes

# Remind young people:

- There is literally no such thing as the 'perfect' body
- Not everything you see on social media is real or what it seems
- Forget about the 'likes'
- Control notifications
- If it gets too much, take a break.

# At home promote

- ✓ Being healthy and strong rather than thin
- ✓ Being kind to yourself
- ✓ Feeling good about yourself
- ✓ Accepting your body as it is
- ✓ Being proud of your achievements
- ✓ Not constantly comparing yourself unfavourably to others
- ✓ Following a range of role models and influencers

# Inappropriate content

- Watched via YouTube, Snapchat and even Twitter
- Intimate images shared on Instagram
- Live streaming on video platforms
- Creating contact as well as consuming

# Rise in consumption of pornography

It is estimated that over 20 million people in the UK regularly watch porn

4 in 10 accessing legal porn sites are thought to be under 18

Concerns that it impacts on expectations of relationships, sex, body image

Can impact negatively on mental health

How much is too much?

# Concerns include:

- Repeated viewing may make children “de-sensitised” to pornography, with young people often seeing it as realistic.
- Sexual acts previously considered specialist and fringe are now considered mainstream and common online.
- Negative impact on understanding of sexual consent and personal boundaries.
- Encourages stereotyping of women/girls and men/boys
- Potential impact on body image as young people compare themselves to porn.
- Risks of grooming and child sexual exploitation



# Recent concerns

- OnlyFans users must be 18 years+ BUT;
- BBC #Nudes4Sale investigated the rise of under 18's selling explicit content not just on OnlyFans but Twitter and Snapchat Premium
- Use fake ID to get round age verification
- Creators can make as much as £30,000 a month
- Think they can make easy money, but don't realise this is a very small percentage
- Can be exploited from there.

# Statutory RSE curriculum

## In school

- the impact of viewing harmful content.
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail. (DfE 2019)

# Talking at home

From puberty onwards it is perfectly normal for children to be interested in:

- ✓ Bodies – their own and other peoples'
- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ Sex

Relationship and sex education starts at home.

## What to do if a child sees inappropriate material

Don't overreact if your child tells you about something they have seen.

You might feel shocked and angry but deal with it calmly so the child knows they can turn to you again.

Report intimate, explicit or inappropriate images to social media platform.

Report it to local police or the National Crime Agency Command (CEOP) at <http://ceop.police.uk>

# CSE and the internet

- Grooming children online for sexual abuse offline;
- Children viewing abusive images of children/pornographic images;
- Selling children online for abuse offline;
- Making abusive images of children;
- Viewing abusive images of children;
- Access to chat lines via the internet or mobile phones;
- Sexting.

# NSPCC social media research

- Instagram increasingly being used in online grooming offences.
- Facebook-owned apps (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp) were used in 51% of cases.
- Snapchat was used in 20% of cases.
- 12,925 offences recorded by police in England and Wales from April 2017 to March 2020, with experts saying poorly designed social media sites are putting children at risk.
- NSPCC calling for the PM to bring forward Online Harm legislation.
- PM urged to ensure companies and named managers can be held criminally responsible for failing to protect children from avoidable harm and abuse.

# Since lockdown

Europol warns that it has received information which *“strongly indicates increased online activity by those seeking child abuse material”*, and that abusers expect children *“to be more vulnerable due to isolation, less supervision and greater online exposure.”*

# Sexting

- Sending of provocative or sexual photos, messages or videos.
- Can be flirty or cheeky messages.
- Can be more graphic and involve the making and sharing of nude or semi-naked pictures or videos.



# What do you think they said?



**100 young people were asked: 'Why do people send nudes?'**

## Main motivations for 'sexting'

1. Normal part of a romantic or sexual relationship
2. Because everybody does it
3. Because they sent me one
4. To get attention from someone you fancy
5. To get positive comments left
6. Because it's exciting
7. To have fun / joking about
8. To get an image back.

# Potential consequences

- Invisible viewership—can be forwarded to *anyone, anywhere, anytime*.
- Embarrassment and shame
- Anger if pictures have been shared or taken without consent
- Images may be used for control and bullying. Threat of revenge, open to blackmail.
- Fear and anxiety over where the pictures are and who has seen them and who hasn't.
- Can damage a young person's digital reputation now and in the future
- Inappropriate pictures can be a part of online grooming.

# Making and sharing inappropriate images – the law

- The age of sexual consent is 16.
- It is illegal for anyone U18 to view porn.
- It is illegal to take a sexually explicit picture and /or film anyone U18 naked.
- This includes consenting U18 couples & ‘naked selfies’ – even if they are never sent.
- It is also illegal to ‘incite’ U18’s.
- Some porn is illegal to watch, make or distribute at any age.

# Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

- Outcome 21 may be considered the most appropriate resolution where the making and sharing is considered non-abusive and there is no evidence of exploitation, grooming, profit motive, malicious intent (e.g. extensive or inappropriate sharing (e.g. uploading onto a pornographic website) or it being persistent behaviour.
- Where these factors are present, outcome 21 would not apply.

# Messages to give

- Think first
- Don't do anything you are uncomfortable with
- Think carefully about who you trust
- If someone is putting pressure on you, get help
- Things can be shared, forwarded and posted online very quickly
- Keep talking – we will help you
- If things do go wrong don't wait, get help fast.

# Additional information

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/advice/parent-guides>
- <https://www.common sense media.org>
- [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- <http://www.fundamentallychildren.com/good-app-guide/>
- <https://www.gaggle.net/top-social-networking-sites-and-apps-kids-use/>
- [www.thinkyounow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkyounow.co.uk/parents)
- [www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com)