



# Safeguarding Update

December 2019

Issue 21



**Digital Safeguarding is an important part of our work to keep children safe. As Christmas draws near, many children may be looking forward to receiving new electronic devices or**

games, so we feel that this is an appropriate time to remind you of simple online safety tips to help parents/carers make safer choices and support their children online.

## Talk to your children:

- Take an active interest in your child's online life and engage in the digital world with them.
- Let your children teach you about their online world and how they use technology; playing new games and exploring websites together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.
- Make sure your children know that you are safe and approachable; remind them that they can tell you if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable, without being told off or punished.

## Setting boundaries:

Much like the 'real world', parents need to set boundaries for children online; this provides them with a clear understanding of the limits, expectations and consequences of their behaviour.

- Agree as a family, how the internet and technology will be used in your home; encourage children to use the online safety messages they learn in school and adapt these into your own family rules.
- Discuss online boundaries too; if your child loves to socialise online, talk to them about what is and isn't appropriate to share with their friends online.
- Remember to role-model positive behaviour online; consider asking your child's permission before posting photos of them on social media this Christmas and empower them to have control over their 'digital reputation'.

## Make informed choices:

It is vital that we fully understand the capabilities and make informed decisions about new games, apps and devices, before giving them to children as a gift.

- Do your research; ask the shop about pre-installed apps or tools and check whether the device or game has an online component, which allows them to connect with others online.
- Always check the PEGI age rating and descriptors on games before buying them for your child and carefully consider whether the content is appropriate for them.

- Familiarise yourself with the privacy, safety and security tools on new devices; ensure you are in a position to teach your child how to make their accounts private and how to block and report other people online.

## Filters and Parental Controls:

Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to illegal, unwanted or unpleasant content online, but there are some simple steps you can take at home to help minimise this risk.

- Make sure you install anti-virus software, filters and parental controls on your child's device before giving it to them.
- Ensure that you are role-modelling good behaviour by using strong passwords yourself; make them difficult to guess and don't share them with your children.
- Remember that blocks and filters are not 100% effective and you can't rely on them alone to protect your children, so remind them to tell you if they see something upsetting online.

## NSPCC

Last Christmas, our helpline responded to nearly 600 contacts mentioning child neglect. This year, Light for Every Childhood aims to raise awareness of the subject and help more children.

Over Christmas, extended family members often contact our helpline after becoming concerned about a young relative they've spent time with.

Last year, we responded to 599 contacts related to neglect between Christmas Eve and 4 January 2018.

Neglect is the most common type of abuse affecting children in the UK. This year, to raise awareness of the subject, we've launched Light For Every Childhood. UK landmarks including Houses of Parliament and the BT Tower have lit up in the NSPCC's green in support.

When schools and services are closed, when children have nowhere else to turn, Childline is here. We're the only service for children open all night, all year, whatever their worry. Our counsellors give children and young people the support they desperately need 24 hours a day.

**Childline**  
**0800 11 11**

If you wish to donate to NSPCC Light for Every Childhood campaign, please visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)



# Safeguarding Update

December 2019

Issue 21



## YouTube and our children: a new kind of celebrity

There's no doubt that YouTube provides an amazing opportunity for children to learn. How many times have we, as adults, found ourselves watching a tutorial on how to do something? It's an invaluable source which can play a huge role of the lives of our children, with many fan-following YouTubers, aspiring to become them and even posting video content themselves.

### How can I tell which 'YouTubers' are safe for my child to follow and which are not?

The best way to do this is to ask your child who they like and then have a quick watch of those channels yourself; you'll very quickly get a gut feeling about whether or not they are age-appropriate or if you want your child being influenced by them. The BBC have created an online resource called 'Own It' aimed at helping children and young people to manage their online lives safely and have recruited a team of 'celebrity vloggers' to give their message.

These stars (including Eman Kellman, Grace Mandaville and Scola) use this channel to give really positive messages and is worth a view with older children too.



It is very important to speak to your child about who they watch and admire as these platforms can give a voice to anyone with anything to say. YouTuber Grace Mandaville advised:

This message is taught during e-safety lessons at school but should be discussed at home too!

*"Just because this one person that you absolutely love thinks this way or says this thing is right, doesn't mean it's necessarily true and that is something you need to be taught".*

### So, are YouTube channels a negative thing?

This really depends on what they are watching. Yes, lots of inappropriate content can be found on YouTube and children can easily be drawn into content which is not age-appropriate; however, there are lots of positive YouTube channels that can help children to learn new skills, develop understanding and empathy and engage in world issues. Some of the celebrities emerging from vlogging channels are really positive role models, such as Nikki Lilly who won a Pride of Britain Award in 2017 and vlogs about a range of pre-teen interests as well as life with a facial malformation. It's worth being cautious of 'roasting', 'drill music' and 'prank' channels though and talking to your child about what they are watching.

**As YouTube do say children should be 13 or over**, if you do choose to allow your child to use it under your supervision, we advise following these steps:

- Turn on Restricted mode – this restricts availability of mature content
- Watch alongside from time to time to get a feel for the channels
- Ensure your child knows how to report content and understands that they can talk to you if they see anything upsetting online
- YouTube Kids is also available with the option to select the shows you prefer your child to watch, however inappropriate content has also been found on here too so please use caution. Services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and BBC iPlayerKids are a great alternative containing lots of children's programmes.

### **My child wants to share on social media. Should I be worried?**

YouTube (along with other social media platforms) should NOT be used by those under the age of 14 due to the way they collect and market user data, coupled with the associated risks of comments on the videos they post and feedback from viewers which may not always be positive or appropriate.

As with all social media platforms it is wise to remind children that what they post online might stay around for a long time and be hard to remove and to bear in mind that embarrassing or controversial content might cause unnecessary stress or impact on education or job opportunities later in life.