



Pershire High Safeguarding Newsletter

Welcome to the Spring Term Safeguarding Newsletter. Newsletters will be sent out to parents and carers on a regular basis to advise students and adults on all matters safeguarding and wellbeing.

Copies of previous Safeguarding Newsletters are available to access and read via the school website, alongside Safeguarding policies and other links. We've put together a Newsletter that focuses on keeping your family safe, advice on how to support your children online and on social media and signposted help for families and mental health resources!

This terms Safeguarding Newsletter is all about online safety. We explore what parents can do to help keep their children safe online, how to have conversations surrounding safety and further support and advice for parents and their children.

Who is on the Pershire High Safeguarding Team?

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: Fiona Lovecy

Email: fl@pershire.worcs.sch.uk



Who else can help?

Please talk to or email your child's tutor, pastoral manager or Head of House. They will be able to help or seek further advice for you.

Don't forget the 6th Form Team! Dedicated support for pastoral, social and emotional needs, plus academic help from Zoe Starkey, 6th Form Lead and Cassie Waters 6th Form Deputy Lead.



What's been happening in school?

- WEST NHS will still be delivering webinars throughout the year to parents and carers . Webinars will be delivered via Teams discussing 'Helping your child to cope with exam stress' and 'Building resilience in your child'. Please see inside the newsletter for more details about these webinars.
- Students have received BE **WISER** assemblies this term. These focus on **Wellness, Inclusivity, Safety, Engagement and Ready**ing them for school.
- Tuesday the 10th February marked Safer Internet Day. This year we are exploring young people's attitude to AI and how it influences their online lives. You can find more information about Safer Internet Day at www.saferinternet.org.uk/sid-research-2026 .
- WEST NHS will also be continuing their 'Exam Stress Group' with students, to help guide them through and worries or stress they have with their upcoming exams and assessments.
- Our Year 11 Positive Pathways students have been getting involved in outdoor extra-curricular activities to support them in their engagement, confidence and motivation during their exam year. We've had such great feedback from these sessions and the students are really enjoying the outings.
- This half term we have been focusing on Young Carers. Young carers are children and young people who provide care for family members who have physical or mental illnesses, disabilities or substance misuse issues. 1 in 5 young people are young carers, with 1 in 12 taking on mid- to high-level care. If you think your child might be a young carer please complete this form: [Young Carers – Fill out form](#) .

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

SMARTPHONE OR BRICK PHONE?



- Internet access
- Social media, games and apps
- Notifications
- Anytime connection
- Parental controls



- NO internet access
- Some games
- Anytime phone calls and texts
- Limited parental controls

When choosing a phone for your child you should consider:

- How will this reduce any risks?
- What does my child need a mobile phone for? Is it simply to stay in touch with you or to access the internet as well?
- How can I help them to safely navigate this phone?

Secondary school ready? Pointers for family conversations about safety



Use and watch good tech

- Choose technology that supports learning – e.g. maths, languages and BBC Bitesize.
- Enjoy quality TV as a family - avoid endless short-reel videos on individual devices. For ideas see: commonsensemedia.org
- Ask your school for device recommendations.

Follow school phone policy

- Read the school's policy to support the school and reinforce the messages at home.
- Consider, does your child have the skills to manage a smart phone? Would a more basic phone be better to start with?
- Agree Home Rules for device use too – such as: familyagreement.lgfl.net

Form good daily habits

- Limit gaming to the weekends – school nights will be busy with homework and clubs.
- Follow minimum age restrictions on apps and games.
- Avoid mindless scrolling. Be mindful of what you digitally consume.
- Read quality books at bedtime.
- Create a study area at home without mobile devices.
- Keep phones and gaming out of bedrooms.
- Buy an alarm clock and consider a "weekly planner" to avoid overuse of tech.
- Read Atomic Habits by James Clear.

Use security settings

Parental Controls help to protect against online harms and deter thieves.

Such as:

- iOS - Family Sharing
- Google - Family Link
- Microsoft - Family Safety

Privacy settings within each App are vital too, to restrict being added into group chats and contacted by strangers. Info and guides can be found here – parentsafe.lgfl.net

Real online harms

The NSPCC calls the internet the "Wild West," because extreme and harmful content is easily accessible on mainstream social media and contact with strangers via platforms and games is all too frequent. Children don't always understand the meaning of words nor the impact of viewing/hearing extreme content. They get excited by new friendship groups and often struggle to self-regulate on these highly addictive apps, which nudge children to share photos, videos and location. Schools have behaviour policies which include expectations of online behaviour. Children who reuse rude words they've heard online or share inappropriate content could face serious consequences.

- Be involved and set security passcodes on children's devices. Consider limiting access to this 'junk food' type tech.
- Check your child's devices regularly. Let them know what you are doing and why.
- Talk to your child regularly about what they do online. This will build trust and help you to be aware and manage risk better.
- Remember, your child might be sensible but those who abuse children are also devious.
- Be open minded. The disinhibition effect online is a real issue. The nicest children can say the meanest things online.
- Your child is naturally curious and may accidentally access harmful content. Avoid blaming or shaming them if they tell you about seeing something – talk.tvf.org.uk

For more information visit – parentsafe.lgfl.net

Website: safeguarding.lgfl.net Email: safeguarding@lgfl.net

GUIDES FOR STARTING CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN

- For younger kids, it's important to talk about boundaries, being kind to others and what they can do if they see or experience anything that worries or upsets them. Story time books like 'The Online Zoo' and '#Goldilocks – a Fairytale for the Digital Age' are great ways to discuss risk, consequence and positive strategies in a non-judgmental, age-appropriate way.
- For older kids, Thorn have 18 topic-based discussion guides with questions to help you start those difficult conversations with your child!
- Go to <https://parents.thorn.org/discussion-guides/> to find out more.

THORN ¹ FOR PARENTS

TOP TIPS FOR TECH

- **It's your choice** – don't let others dictate when the time is right to use tech.
- **Stay involved** – make time to communicate, talk about what they are doing. What do they enjoy? What makes them laugh?
- **Don't quiz them** – have regular conversations. What's their favourite app? What is the best site to learn new things from?
- **Join in** – watch them play a game and join in. Who are they playing with? Do they know the other players?
- **'Show me how...'** – ask their advice to help you with your privacy settings, who you should add as a friend, are there any risks?
- **Lead by example** – children learn as much from watching as they do from being told not to do something, so model good behaviour.
- **Reassure them** – tell them that they won't get in trouble and that you are always there to help.

ONLINE SAFETY RISKS

What's wrong with sharenting?

'Sharenting' is when parents share photos of their children online and more than 75% of parents have shared their children's images on social media.

The risks of sharenting are:

- **Identity theft** – sharenting habits expose incredible amounts of personal information about their children. More than 80% of parents use their kids' real names on social media posts.
- **Permanent** – even if a post is deleted, someone could have taken a copy, which could put the child at risk.
- **Losing control of images** – most social media sites own any content posted to their platform.
- **Exposure to child predators** – images parents share can contain information that allows predators to track children.

Sextortion

Financially motivated sexual extortion (sextortion) is a form of blackmail that can force an individual into paying money to an offender who is threatening to share nude or semi-nude images of them.

How does sextortion happen?

- Targeting young people through social online sites
- Requesting and pressuring the child for images or videos
- Blackmailing them for money or further intimate content
- Claiming they have hacked their accounts and have access to information, images and videos

Links to advice for parents about sextortion:

[Advice for parents of children who are being 'sextorted' online](#)

[Sextortion - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

The risks of online friends

Are you familiar with who your child is in contact with online?

Children often use gaming as a tool to communicate with their peers, with 64% of 8–17-year-olds chatting online to people they know in real life.

However, 31% of children who game online, communicate with strangers as well.

Communication online can sometimes leave children open to untoward interactions.

Having open conversation with your children about the risks of online friends and what these risks look like will help them to be more aware of the dangers of online communication.

Visit gaming.lgfl.net for more advice on this topic.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming a regular part of children's online experiences. AI brings risks, especially when children aren't sure what's real, who they're talking to, or how AI works.

The risks of AI are: manipulation, misinformation, exposure to harmful content, privacy and data security, and in rare cases, AI-generated abuse and sextortion.

Ways to support your child with AI:

- Explore the apps and websites your child uses. Where is AI present in these?
- Model positive behaviour and critical thinking
- Explore AI tools together
- Help your child understand when it's appropriate to use AI

MONITORING AND SUPERVISING ONLINE

Setting up parental controls and privacy settings

It's important that controls are set up on both the broadband connection and each device.

Internet Matters has some great advice on how to set up controls on any smartphone, broadband or social media site. Find them here: internetmatters.org/parental-controls.

As well as setting controls on your broadband, device, apps, games etc., parental control apps like **Google Family Link**, **Screen Time** and **Microsoft Family** can further enhance safety by letting you set limits across these spaces separately. You can manage screen time, app access, inappropriate content restrictions and more.

REMEMBER – as children get older, restrictions and controls you use will change. Content filters are never 100% effective, so make time to check your settings.

Why does monitoring matter?

- Young people can get around age restrictions on websites and apps, increasing the risk of them coming to harm online.
- Many children have online profiles that make them appear older than they actually are – exposing them to content inappropriate for their age and harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

It is a good idea to continuously monitor your child's devices. Are you aware of your child's online activity?

The Four C's

The 4 Cs of online safety is a useful way to identify online safety risks for children:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer pressure, grooming and exploitation.

Conduct – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, and sharing and receiving explicit images.

Commerce – risks such as online gambling inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial schemes

Up to a third of children age 8-17 are being exposed to content online that they find worrying or nasty, but only 20% of parents report their child telling them about worrying content they have seen.

Screentime

'Screentime' refers to the amount of time that someone spends using a screen, including television, phone and tablet.

Risks of overexposure to screens:

- Weakened communication and social skills
- Increased central nervous system arousal, which can amplify anxiety
- Blue light affects our sleep cycles negatively

How to make the most out of screen time:

- Make sure it supports their development
- Have regular conversations and check ins
- Model positive screen use
- Create healthy habits early

For more information on screentime and how to help manage children's screentime visit:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/screentime>

PRIVACY SETTINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

WhatsApp:

WhatsApp is a free mobile messaging app which allows users to send and receive messages, images and videos to their existing phone contacts, using an internet connection.

- [Age requirement](#) 16+
- [WhatsApp's Help Centre](#) for advice around certain topics or needs
<https://faq.whatsapp.com>
- Advice on reporting and blocking contacts:
<https://faq.whatsapp.com/iphone/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-contacts>
- Read the Community Guidelines for information about WhatsApp's safety and security essentials:
<https://faq.whatsapp.com/general/security-and-privacy>

Instagram:

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app that is popular with teens. You can connect with other people through comments, captions, reels, stories and hashtags on photos and videos.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+
- [Instagram Safety Centre](#) provides more information about safety and security on the app as well as a guide for parents and carers: [Help Center](#)
- Click here to access the Safer Internet Centre's new Instagram Privacy and Safety Checklist:
[New Instagram Privacy and Safety Checklist - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

YouTube:

YouTube is a video-sharing website owned by Google. There are a range of safety features such as reporting tools and restricting access to inappropriate content in Safety Mode.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+, however, it is possible to watch videos without registering an account.
- Click here to find out more about restricted modes on YouTube:
[Turn Restricted mode on or off on YouTube - Computer - YouTube Help](#)
- Privacy and safety centre
[Privacy and safety centre - YouTube](#)
- Parental controls
[Age-appropriate media for children and teens](#)

Facebook

Facebook is a social network that has over a billion users globally. Young people use Facebook to connect with friends or family, to see and share updates and posts, and to follow brands, celebrities and influencers they like.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+
- Facebook has advice on a range of topics:
Facebook's Safety Centre:
[Meta Safety Centre | Meta](#)
- Bullying Prevention Hub:
[Bullying and harassment | Meta](#)
- Safety tools: [Meta Safety Centre | Meta](#)

TikTok:

TikTok is a platform that allows users to express themselves through dancing, lip-syncing, comedy sketches, makeup tutorials, and by telling stories about their lives in short videos.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+
- [TikTok's Safety Centre](#) has advice and guides on tools users can utilise to protect themselves online: [Safety Center](#)
- [Guardians Guide: Guardian's Guide](#)
- Safety and privacy controls:
[Account settings](#)

Snapchat

Snapchat is a messaging app popular with teens that allows them to share user-generated photos, texts and videos which only last on screen for a matter of seconds.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+
- [Snapchat's Safety Centre](#) has advice and guides on tools users can utilise to protect themselves online:
[Safety Center - Social Media](#)
- Check out this checklist on [SWGfL](#) on all things Snapchat safety:
[Snapchat Checklist - Download or Buy](#)

X (Formally Twitter)

X is a social media platform that allows users to communicate in short messages called tweets. Many people use X for news, as well as to follow their friends, favourite celebrities or brands.

- [Age requirement](#) 13+
- [X's Safety Centre](#) has advice and guides on things such as spam, fake accounts, sensitive content and abuse
[Safety and security](#)
- Use this checklist from [SWGfL](#) to get the most out of your privacy and security settings

[X \(Formally Twitter\) Checklist - Download or Buy X](#)

While parental controls and privacy settings are a helpful tool there are still limitations. We recommend:

- Talk to your child. Explain why you are setting parental controls and urging them to make the most of their privacy settings. Let them know that they can talk to you if they have any worries or questions about privacy settings.
- Set good, strong passwords where you are able. On some parental controls you can set a password which prevents settings and features from being changed.
- Check if any of their apps have 'geo-location' enabled, sharing their location unintentionally.

For more information and advice on parental controls and privacy settings:

[Social media guides - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

GENERAL ADVICE FOR HEALTHY ONLINE USE

Digital 5 A Day

The Digital 5 A Day can support children to find a healthy balance between their online and offline activities.

How to get your 'Digital 5 A Day':

1. Connect – stay in touch with friends and family both online and offline.
2. Get moving – take some time off and get active. Movement boosts positive brain chemicals and helps our emotional wellbeing.
3. Take time for YOU – the internet can be great for building new skills and discovering new passions. But don't forget your real-life hobbies and stuff you enjoy.
4. Stop and take notice – get offline and take a moment or two to be aware of the world around you and what you're feeling
5. Give – do something nice for someone.

Modelling good online behaviour

Children learn by watching the adults around them. This means that your own online habits matter.

You can be a positive role model by:

- Taking breaks from screens and avoiding negative content
- Keeping your passwords safe and private
- Talking about what you've seen online and depending on your child's age, you could discuss trustworthy and untrustworthy sites and sources.
- Ask your child before sharing their photos online. Show them what you're posting to check if they're comfortable with it.

When you lead by example, your child is more likely to follow your advice and feel supported in making good online choices.

Algorithms and the risk they pose

All social medias have algorithms that are personalised for each individual user. They show you content that you are most likely to interact with based on what you have liked and engaged with previously. This makes social media even more addictive than it already is.

Addictive algorithms can make it harder to take a break and maintain a healthy balance between time on and offline.

This can prevent children from finding new ideas and perspectives and allows misinformation to spread and stereotypes to be reinforced.

Visit [Cookies and algorithms: Children's privacy online | Internet Matters](#) to learn more about how algorithms impact children's safety and privacy online.

You can find more in depth advice and guidance on all topics online safety from these websites:

[Homepage - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Keep Children Safe Online: Information, advice, support - Internet Matters](#)

[NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#)

[Keeping children safe online: advice for parents and carers | Barnardo's](#)

[Online Safety Toolkit | Parentkind](#)

[How to Keep Children Safe Online | Save the Children UK](#)

[Parents and Carers Toolkit | Childnet](#)

You can also contact any member of staff at Pershore High School if you have any worries or concerns regarding your child's internet use.