

OCTOBER SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Online safety: devices • gaming • messaging • parental controls

This month's safeguarding focus is online safety. Children use technology to learn, play and communicate, so our aim is not to make them fearful of the online world, but to help them use it safely, confidently and responsibly. The most effective protection is regular, calm conversation at home alongside sensible device settings and clear family boundaries.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS CHECK?

- Which apps, games and websites does your child actually use?
- Are privacy settings appropriate for your child's age?
- Is location sharing switched off unless genuinely needed?
- Who can message, add or follow your child?
- Are in-app purchases or payment details protected?
- Can your child show you how to block and report another user?

Tip: ask your child to show you, rather than simply asking if everything is safe.

ONLINE FRIENDS & MESSAGING

Online friendships can feel just as real and important to children as friendships in school.

Children should know that people online are not always who they claim to be.

They should never feel pressured to share personal information, photos or videos, or to move a conversation to a more private platform.

If a message or contact makes them uncomfortable, the key message is: stop, block/report where appropriate, and tell a trusted adult.

Please keep conversations open: children are more likely to tell an adult if they know the first response will be calm and supportive.

THE 5-MINUTE FAMILY DEVICE CHECK

1. Privacy

Open the privacy settings together. Check profile visibility, messaging and location.

2. People

Review friends/followers. Ask whether your child knows each person in real life.

3. Reporting

Ask your child to show you where the block/report controls are on their main app or game.

4. Bedtime

Agree where devices are kept overnight. Keeping devices out of bedrooms can support sleep and reduce unsupervised late-night contact.

A SIMPLE FAMILY ONLINE-SAFETY AGREEMENT

We will talk openly about what we do online. We will not share passwords with friends. We will check before accepting new contacts. We will tell an adult if something makes us worried, uncomfortable or confused. Adults will listen first and help us solve the problem.

AGE-APPROPRIATE APPS AND GAMES

Age ratings and platform rules are useful starting points, but they do not replace parental judgement. Consider the content, communication features, advertising, purchases and whether the game/app allows contact with strangers. Most importantly, know what your child is using and revisit settings regularly.

THIS MONTH'S FAMILY CONVERSATION

Ask: "If someone you only knew online asked you to keep a conversation secret, send a photo or move onto another app, what would you do?" Then agree together which adult your child would tell first.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

If your child experiences upsetting, threatening or inappropriate online contact, reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do. Where appropriate, preserve relevant information, use platform reporting/blocking tools and contact school if the issue affects your child or involves other pupils. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

PARENT ONLINE-SAFETY SUPPORT

Please reach out if you require further support for online safety. Even if it is for a bit of school staff back up!

We will use pupil voice to make sure our advice reflects the apps, games and online issues children are actually encountering.

COMING IN NOVEMBER

Dark nights, road safety, bonfire/firework safety and staying safe in the local community.

Glusburn Community Primary and Nursery School • Ready, Respectful, Safe

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