



ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2

Welcome to the next edition of our monthly Online Safety Newsletter.

The newsletter will aim to highlight trends in gaming, social media apps and websites which prove popular with primary school aged children and equip parents/carers with the latest information to help keep children safe online.

This month our newsletter will provide information on You Tube, mobile phone safety, social media algorithms and TikTok - school wars.

Screen time & online harms

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have created a page that brings together key resources on screen time.

Find out more here:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/screen-time-online-harms-resources-members>



NORBRIDGE ACADEMY SAFEGUARDING TEAM

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SOCIAL MEDIA ALGORITHMS

What is an Algorithm?

Algorithms influence what we see on social media platforms and predict what type of content we are most likely to interact with, thereby keeping us online for longer.

The algorithm uses information such as who you follow, what you have searched for and what you have watched, liked or shared to determine what it thinks most interests you. It will then show you this content more, for example, in the explore tab on Instagram.

What do I need to know?

Whilst there are benefits to algorithms, for example it means we tend to see content that does interest us, unfortunately there are negatives as well. They can lead to increased screentime as we continue to see things that interest us. Secondly, it can lead to users being shown large amounts of inappropriate content which can for example, exacerbate negative body image or heighten access to misogyny content.

It can also lead to 'echo chambers' where you are only seeing content that relates to your opinion rather than seeing a balanced viewpoint.

Further information - <https://cybersmarties.com/behind-the-screen-how-algorithms-shape-what-kids-see-online/>

The BBC discuss algorithms in this article about doomscrolling: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwnk3qt>

MOBILE PHONES: DO YOU KNOW THE RISKS?

We know that children having access to a smartphone can expose children to risks including:

- Viewing inappropriate content
- Excessive screen time/use, which in turn can affect their mental health and sleep pattern.
- Contact from inappropriate people/grooming
- Cyberbullying
- Spending money on in-app purchases/scams

What effects do mobile phones have on children's mental health?

Compass discuss the research around this important topic, outlining the positive and negative effects that mobile phones have: <https://compass-uk.org/services/compass-changing-lives/online-resources/what-effects-do-mobile-phones-have-on-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health/>

EE Online Safety Hub EE has published age guidance for smartphone usage to improve children's digital wellbeing. In summary, they recommend that children under 11 should use non-smart devices, for children aged 11-13, they advise that if a smartphone is used, then parental controls should be enabled and access to social media restricted. Finally, for 13-16-year-olds they still recommend that parental controls are implemented and appropriate restrictions set up. You can read the full guidance here: <https://ee.co.uk/internet-online-safety>

Could you delay when your child is given a smartphone with Smartphone Free Childhood?

The premise behind this movement is that all parents/carers of a class all agree not to give their children smartphones (therefore the level of peer pressure is reduced) for a set time or until a specific age: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

What device?

When you think it is the right time for your child to have a phone, then 'Which?' provide an overview of some options available: <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/mobile-phones/article/buying-a-first-mobile-phone-best-dumb-phones-and-smartphones-for-kids> aA03C3Y8aTzr

YOU TUBE SAFETY UPDATE

YouTube Safety Update: New Parental Controls

YouTube have published their latest update on how parents can support their child on YouTube. YouTube will now allow parents to set the amount of time viewing Shorts – this can even be set to zero. YouTube Shorts are short videos, usually less than 60 seconds long, which when continuously watched, can lead to excessive screentime.

Furthermore, parents will also be able to set bedtime and ‘take a break’ reminders.

You can find out more here: <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/updates-youtube-supervised-accounts-teens/>

If you would like to find out more about supervised accounts on YouTube, then this article explains the different settings available:

[https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420?](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420?hl=en_GB&ref_topic=15279060&sjid=15225282118002181205-EU)

[hl=en_GB&ref_topic=15279060&sjid=15225282118002181205-EU](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420?hl=en_GB&ref_topic=15279060&sjid=15225282118002181205-EU)



TIKTOK – SCHOOL WARS

Recent social media posts initially circulating across several London boroughs, have now reached the Midlands area, referring to “school wars.” This is a new TikTok trend which encourages groups of schools and children from the 2 opposing teams (blue and red) to fight each other, film and post these fights to get “points”.

Please be reassured that the local authority and the police are fully aware of this online activity and are working closely with our local Safer Neighbourhood Teams, to maintain a zero-tolerance approach to any form of disorder.

Currently, we have no indication of any specific risk to our pupils, and this information is intended purely as a precaution.

How you can help:

- Please speak with your child about staying safe, avoiding online rumours, and not engaging with any social media challenges connected to this trend.
- We would also encourage parents to ensure that pupils are not bringing items to school that could be associated with rival identifiers.
- If you or your child becomes aware of any information that may be helpful, please report it directly to the police via 101, or 999 in an emergency. Please also keep us informed.

What is being done:

- We are closely monitoring the situation and liaising with local agencies and partners should anything arise in the local area.

A reminder of our expectations:

- We have a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour both in and out of the school, and online. It is important that students feel safe both in school and in the community.
- We will always take the most rigorous steps to sanction any student who becomes involved in this type of activity, either as an individual or as part of a group.



DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS



Miss R. Jackson
Senior Safeguarding Lead



Mrs L. North
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs S. Townsend
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Mr S. Machin
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs E. Williams
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs K. Whittington
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DT for LAC Children

If you have ANY concerns regarding a child, please contact a DSL on

01909 579515

or contact the MASH Team on

0300 500 8090.