



Safeguarding Newsletter

Issue 9 – 18.3.24

Nothing is more important to us than the safety and welfare of our pupils.

We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people within our school. We work closely with families and a range of professional external agencies to secure this and follow Dudley

Safeguarding policies and procedures within our school.

We hope you find this Safeguarding Newsletter useful and aim to send at least one each half term.

Pupil Feedback

Last term we asked pupils in Year 2 to Year 6 a series of Safeguarding questions, their responses were very pleasing, the tables below outline the percentage of children who answered either 'always' or 'usually.'

I feel happy at school		I feel safe at school		I feel safe on school visits		I know what to do if there is a fire in school	
Year 2	75%	Year 2	90%	Year 2	91%	Year 2	92%
Year 3	88%	Year 3	96%	Year 3	95%	Year 3	98%
Year 4	83%	Year 4	95%	Year 4	96%	Year 4	96%
Year 5	84%	Year 5	99%	Year 5	94%	Year 5	98%
Year 6	78%	Year 6	92%	Year 6	92%	Year 6	99%

I learn about online safety in school		School teaches me to be safe	
Year 2	90%	Year 2	94%
Year 3	95%	Year 3	91%
Year 4	94%	Year 4	91%
Year 5	89%	Year 5	91%
Year 6	87%	Year 6	81%

Support for families

There are a number of ways school can support families beyond what you may expect. We work closely with a number of organizations, the local authority and various charities. We can usually find a way, or signpost to another organization, to help in a range of situations...

Pre Loved Uniform – we have many items of washed pre loved uniform that is given to any family in need of uniform.

Kids Clothes Project – we can refer families who may be in need of non-uniform clothing for children between the ages 2-12.

Black Country Food Bank – we can issue vouchers for food bank items, for times where you may need a bit of a helping hand with the food shopping.

Hearts Of Gold – we work closely with this wonderful local charity who help families at Christmas who may need a bit of support with the financial pressures at Christmas by donating presents.

Reflexions – we can refer children for support from this NHS service, who work with children presenting with low level anxiety.

Arts of Change – we can refer children (and adults) who live in Dudley to receive free counselling for a range of issues.

Provision House - Support with Food Club and also Home Starter Package for those facing financial hardship or a range of challenging situations.

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Triple P - For any parent struggling with their child's challenging behaviour, learn new skills either online or face to face groups

Sometimes we are able to provide vouchers for local supermarkets if we know a family is facing financial hardship. If you are struggling, please don't suffer in silence, come and talk to us. Your concerns will be dealt with quickly, sensitively, confidentially and without judgement.

Please contact one of the Safeguarding team to discuss any concerns further.

Useful Safeguarding Acronyms and Vocabulary

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

MASH: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

CP: Child Protection

CiN: Child in Need

CEOP: Child Exploitation and On-Line Protection Centre

KCSIE: Keeping Children Safe in Education

PREVENT: Part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy to stop people being drawn into extremism

CAMHs: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

SEND: Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

What is Doxing? A Guide for Parents

For many of us when we go online, our privacy is something that we prioritise.

Although we may like to share our holiday pictures and birthday celebrations on social media, there are some things which are just off limits. Specific details such as our home address, or our contact number may be publicly available somewhere, but that doesn't mean we necessarily want everybody to know about it. Because of this, the act or threat of our personal details being shared online can carry considerable harm and upset to targeted individuals. This is where the term 'Doxing' came about.



In recent years, the practice of doxing has made considerable headlines within online circles, particularly on social media as well as in gaming communities. In short, it is a practice where individuals or groups expose and publicise private information about a person on the internet without their consent, often for the purposes of causing distress or creating malicious intent.

Personal information can include home addresses, phone numbers, job location, email addresses, and even information about family members or loved ones. Those who commit this act often exploit publicly available information across online platforms such as social media or betray the trust of someone they know; releasing information that was already known prior.

Why Do People Dox?

Due to the varying scenarios that can occur, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly why doxing takes place. Perpetrators may want to target an individual because of a disagreement or a conflict that may have previously occurred. There could be a desire to intimidate or harass someone which can lead to blackmail or other forms of extortion.

In some cases, doxing is associated with online vigilantism, where individuals take matters into their own hands to expose individuals for a perceived crime or a social injustice. If there is malicious intent, a perpetrator may encourage other online users to harass or abuse the individual with the information provided. In some situations, this can lead to real world harm such as stalking, violence and in severe cases, a danger to life. Exposure of personal information can also lead to long-term emotional distress for the victim as well as potential reputational damage. If doxing occurs due to an 'accusation of abuse' then this would usually be classed as a criminal matter and the police would need to be involved.

Is Doxing Illegal?

While doxing is not illegal in the UK, it can lead to consequences for the perpetrator if there is malicious intent that leads to harassment of an individual.



Protecting Against Doxing

As a lot of personal information is readily available online, it's important to take steps to protect yourself from information falling into the wrong hands. This includes regularly [reviewing privacy and visibility settings](#) on social media platforms and critically thinking about the amount of personal information we choose to share publicly. We must remember that it is very easy to let information slip, so vigilance and caution is required.

You may also consider using online tools such as [Reputation Alerts](#) if you feel information has been shared but you're not sure where or by who.

What If My Information Has Been Shared?

If you are concerned that someone has shared your information online without consent, you can report the individual to the online platform and flag it as a privacy violation. Community guidelines will vary across this area so it's important to see what different platforms will be able to support with.

[Information on this can be found on Report Harmful Content.](#)

If you feel you are in any danger, always phone the police on 999. It's important to collect as much evidence as you can so they will be able to understand the situation as best as they can.

Chroming

A dangerous new 'challenge' on social platforms like TikTok have recently been blamed for causing serious child injuries and in some cases, death. "Chroming" is the act of inhaling a toxic chemical such as paint, solvent, aerosol cans, glue, cleaning products, or petrol for a short-term high.

The recommended age limit for TikTok is 13. Unfortunately, alongside the maturity required for children to see these 'challenges' and realise it is dangerous, messaging on TikTok is also one of the biggest reasons TikTok can be dangerous. Messages sent between users on TikTok are not encrypted. This means that TikTok can examine your child's messages with other users to determine what kind of content they most frequently share. With over 1.1 billion users worldwide, the potential for contact with strangers is high.



The following website has many useful guides about different online platforms that parents may find useful.

<https://nationalcollege.com/categories/online-safety>

A link is also available on the school website under the E-safety tab.

Meet our Safeguarding Team

Tracy Curnin



DSL

Simon Duncan



Deputy DSL

Hayley Owen



Deputy DSL

Ellen Foxall



Deputy DSL

Karen Bridgwater



Safeguarding Officer

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

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CENSORED

DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

TikTok can be addictive, especially for young people: compulsive repeated use can interfere with sleep patterns and be a distraction from other activities. The platform recently introduced default usage time limits of 60 and 100 minutes for new members under 18 (in the UK, children with TikTok average 102 minutes per day on the app), but these restrictions can easily be removed in the settings.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-18s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



National
Online
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

FORTNITE

CHAPTER
4

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI 12

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Fortnite may be something of a veteran in gaming terms (having launched back in 2017), but it remains massively popular – with more than 250 million people playing online every month. That's partially due to the competitive nature of its player-vs-player combat, its pop culture crossovers and its constantly shifting map. Significant updates are rolled out with each new version of the game – known as 'chapters' – and within these sit shorter 'seasons', which bring more subtle changes. The latest iteration, Chapter 4 Season 2, adds a cyberpunk-themed city and anime-style areas, for example, along with new weapons and characters.

ALWAYS ONLINE

There's no single-player offline mode in Fortnite: it can only be played online. Internet access can sometimes be an issue when you're out and about (both in terms of connectivity and using up data), so you may find that dedicated young Fortnite players are often less enthusiastic about trips away of a certain length – such as days out and holidays – than you might have expected.

IN-GAME COSTS

Fortnite is free to download and play, but it does offer various additional purchases – cosmetic skins, rare weapons and so on – which don't really impact on gameplay, but can cost quite a significant amount. These items are bought with game's currency, V-Bucks – which can be earned through playing, but are also often purchased from the game's store for real-world money.

POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Part of Fortnite's appeal is its ongoing crossovers with other popular franchises, ranging from movies and TV shows like *The Walking Dead* to comic book characters including Batman to other games such as *Street Fighter*. This means you could find your child asking questions about the creature from *Alien* or who Geralt from *The Witcher* is a little sooner than you'd possibly anticipated.

CROSSPLAY AND PARTY CHAT

Fortnite is popular with vast numbers of gamers – of various ages. Crossplay lets friends play with and against each other, regardless of whether they're on an Xbox, PlayStation or PC – while party chat allows them to communicate during the game. This chat feature can also, therefore, put youngsters at risk of hearing inappropriate language from older players in the heat of virtual combat.

VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

At its core, there's no avoiding that Fortnite is about shooting other players to eliminate them. That said, there's no blood or gore: the violence is generally rendered in a cartoonish style, and there are frequent comical touches to lighten the mood (fishing mini-games, for example). The machine guns, shotguns and other weapons often look and behave realistically, however, so discretion is advised.

FREQUENT UPDATES

The game's developers release content in 'seasons' that usually run for around ten weeks. Each fresh update sees items added to the in-game store, changes to the environment's map and a different over-arching theme (such as 'medieval', 'pirates' or 'party'). These regular renewals help to hold players' interest – but also give young gamers plenty of reasons to keep returning to their screens.

Advice for Parents & Carers

MATCH GAMING TIMES

Younger players tend to want to play Fortnite alongside their friends. With this in mind, it could be worth speaking to the parents and carers of your child's social group and trying to coordinate their gaming around certain hours of the day. Safety in numbers is obviously a factor here, but it will also help your child feel that they're getting adequate opportunity to socialise with their friends online.

SET SPENDING LIMITS

Fortnite's rotating store is a not-so-subtle mechanism for coaxing players into splashing out on those sought-after items before they disappear again for weeks. This could potentially lead to surprise outlays on your card if your child is tempted into an impulsive purchase. You could consider setting up a prepaid card for them to use – or ensuring that any online purchases require adult authorisation.

USE UPDATES AS REWARDS

Fortnite's seasonal updates are free – but each also brings the option of a 'battle pass', unlocking exclusive rewards for playing the game and completing set challenges. The passes cost around £8 (and are available as part of larger bundles) and can be an effective reward to young Fortnite fans for good behaviour or academic performance, or as an incentive for chores like tidying their room.

BE WARY OF SCAMS

The immense popularity of Fortnite with more trusting younger audiences means that there's no shortage of scammers looking to fraudulently obtain passwords and other personal data through techniques like phishing. As the developers point out on many of Fortnite's loading screens, they never ask for a player's account password outside of the game: make sure your child knows this.

ENJOY FORTNITE TOGETHER

Fortnite also offers split-screen gameplay, meaning that two people can play simultaneously via the same TV or computer. That's ideal for siblings or when your child's friends visit – but it also offers you an opportunity to spend time doing something fun with your child, while also being able to make sure they're playing the game safely. Who knows, you might even teach them a thing or two!

Meet Our Expert

Ugoel Cormier is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site *GCRecon* and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including *IGN* and *TechRadar*.



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