

WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM



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RESPONDING TO ONLINE CHALLENGES

We are hearing more and more reports of online challenges popping up on social media platforms. While not all pose potential risk, it is important as a parent/guardian to know how to handle an online challenge you may be concerned about.

What are Online Challenges? They are social media trends where people take part in or mimic games, activities or dares. They typically originate on social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram before spreading to other platforms. Some challenges or online trends are reported by the press first. They tend to use the term 'viral', which can give the impression that the challenge or trend is more popular than it actually is.

Advice for parents

Talking to your child about online challenges can seem daunting, especially if they don't come to you on their own. Having an honest conversation with your child about their online habits is the best way to address the concern.

https://ineqe.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OnlineChallengesAdvice_INEQE_2022-1.pdf

'HI MUM' SCAM ALERT!

We have recently been made aware of a phishing scam known as 'Hi Mum' that has been circulating through text messages or instant messaging services, such as WhatsApp.

The scam involves the impersonation of friends or family members in order to gain access to personal information. We strongly encourage you to read the article provided via the link below for guidance on identifying phishing scams and how to deal with them if you have been targeted.

https://ineqe.com/2022/09/12/scam-alert/?utm_campaign=Slender%20Man&utm_medium=email&hsmi=225733939&hsenc=p2ANqtz-rUanehUHyXkPj2fldBDp9PN5mCSy-lQj95fGnMuknFCfIW2t1-kjZQN9SMN91E_OV5SessrfyOqROSl0w1a57MF8SqwKisLlt_awiMIPfd_b7M&utm_content=225733939&utm_source=hs_email

DARK EVENING SAFETY TIPS

As the nights are darker, it is an overnight adjustment for all of us keeping children safe in the dark. The darker evenings can have a big impact on our usual routines of picking children up from friends, after-school clubs, or cycling home from school. They can be very different experiences in the dark. The following simple steps can be taken to help avoid risks of accidents that the dark evenings can bring.

Visibility is key

- Children need to be seen, not just by other motorists and cyclists but by pedestrians. It is vital to teach your children good road safety basics from an early age.
- Think about what your child is wearing as school uniforms can be dark, you can add add high-visibility strips to their clothing, school bags or bike helmets when cycling to and from school.

<https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/rules-for-pedestrians.html>

PARENT SUPPORT

Parents/Guardians Learning Programme

Sexual Abuse Learning Programme (Parents Protect) has developed this online child sexual abuse and exploitation awareness learning programme which aims to:

- Understand potential risks
- Recognise the signs of possible abuse in children
- Beware of inappropriate behaviour in adults
- Know where to go for help if you have concerns and would like to talk about them

<https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/sexual-abuse-learning-programme.htm>

Parenting smart

The children's mental health charity, Place2Be, has launched a new website aimed at helping parents with typical situations they may experience with children.

Advice can be found on over forty topics including:

- Understanding sibling rivalry
- My child is lying, what does it mean, what should I do?
- My child has trouble going to sleep
- My child says, 'I hate you!' Cultural identity: who am I?

<https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/sexual-abuse-learning-programme.htm>



USEFUL INFORMATION

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many platforms which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about REDDiT

Reddit describes itself as a social news website where users connect and share stories, opinions and support; debate issues; ask questions; and chat to people with similar interests. Discussion topics are organised into communities (known as subreddits) that are created, run and populated by users, who remain anonymous throughout. Free speech is encouraged, and users – or ‘redditors’ – can vote posts ‘up’ or ‘down’ so they get more (or less) attention. Reddit is free to join, although signing up to Reddit Premium unlocks an advert-free version of the platform.

AGE RATING
13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

R/FUNNY **R/TRENDING** **R/MEMES**

MINIMAL MODERATION

As sharing opinions on Reddit is easy (and anonymous), offensive or age-inappropriate content is frequently posted. Moderation by admins and bots does occur, but can't cover every community – so Reddit relies on users voluntarily moderating these spaces. Subreddits marked NSFW (‘not safe for work’) can contain anything from profanity to pornography, so are not suitable for under 18s.

HARASSMENT AND TROLLING

If someone on Reddit doesn't agree with your child's opinion, they may feel compelled to say so – in no uncertain terms. This could lead to a public bombardment of hurtful messages. Likewise, Reddit users are highly likely to encounter trolling (where someone posts a deliberately inflammatory comment to provoke a reaction) on the platform, which can be distressing.

FAKE NEWS

Absolutely anyone can post a story on Reddit, so sub-reddits are occasionally prone to bias, misinformation and opinions being repeated as if they are facts. Fake news articles often grab users' attention with catchy or controversial headlines, and Reddit is no exception. It's important that young people are able to identify fake news – and disregard it rather than sharing it.

GIFTING AND SPENDING

Users can gift awards to the authors of posts that they like (thereby encouraging their favourite redditors to keep contributing) by spending Reddit Coins. This virtual currency can be bought on demand (with real money) or received as part of the paid-for premium package. Users sending a gift can also leave an anonymous private message, a feature which has been abused by groomers.

'SUPPORTIVE' STRANGERS

By definition, Reddit users interact with strangers in public through their community – but also have the option to do so privately. Groomers could repeatedly up-vote a child's comments or respond encouragingly to their posts to win their trust. Once they've built a rapport, the predator then begins messaging the child in private to obtain personal details or try to lure them into meeting in person.

NEVER-ENDING NOTIFICATIONS

Reddit's default is for all notifications to be on. There are a total of 26 types of notification on the platform, ranging from chat messages and comments to updates and mentions of username. This would lead to a child's device being pinged almost constantly with alerts, frequently causing them to be distracted by incoming notifications rather than being present in the moment.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SORT THE SETTINGS

Reddit's user settings can help ensure that minors don't view adult material. Under the 'Feed Settings' tab, switch the Adult Content toggle to 'off', and enable Safe Browsing Mode (this blurs out any explicit images). Also in settings, you can turn off all unnecessary notifications, to prevent your child being distracted by every post or comment on Reddit, allowing them some tech-free time.

RISE ABOVE IT

If a person says something critical or offensive to your child on Reddit, it's natural that they'll want to respond. Explain to them, however, that is exactly the reaction that trolls look for. Don't give them the satisfaction; instead, report the comment to Reddit Support for investigation. Blocking a user stops them from messaging or following your child on the platform.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

It can often be difficult to tell if something online is real or fake – particularly for young people. It's important to encourage your child to double-check with reputable sources if what they've read is genuine. Remind them to consider what motives might be in the message – and to watch out for scams. Chatting about this regularly helps to develop critical thinking skills and good online habits.

AVOID PRIVATE MESSAGING

Through their Reddit profile, young people can control who's able to message them privately – with options including 'no-one' and 'accounts older than 30 days'. These controls help ensure potential groomers can't talk to your child in private, and that Reddit's admins and other users will be able to moderate and report anything they spot which causes them concern.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at BCyberAware. She has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. Claire has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

Sources: <https://www.redditinc.com/policies/privacy-policy> (september '22) | <https://www.redditinc.com/policies/terms-of-use> (september '22) | <https://www.redditinc.com/policies/terms-of-use> (september '22)

www.nationalonlinesafety.com @natonlinesafety /NationalOnlineSafety @nationalonlinesafety

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