WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

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Safeguarding links

- Catmose Primary Child Protection Policy - https://www.catmoseprimary.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Primary-Pupil-Child-Protection-Policy-September-202566.pdf
- Rutland and District Schools' Federation Safeguarding Policy - https://www.rutlandfederation.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Federation-Student-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2025.pdf

SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology and social media can be enriching for children who achieve a balance in the time spent using it and where they are appropriately supervised. However, for other children it can be a less helpful experience

We frequently support children who have faced upsetting situations with social media use and instant messaging platforms. Here you can find some common issues which arise:

Group chats: multiple children are added to a group chat where the messages can quickly become upsetting and unsettling, children can feel isolated and unsure what to do when the messages take a negative turn. Many children worry about the content of the messages being shared and what will happen if they leave the group.

We strongly recommend that children do not join group chats as they have a significant impact on children's health and well-being.

Screen shots and camera rolls: children's images are routinely screenshotted and stored by their friends often because messaging apps link to the camera roll on their mobile devices. Sometimes children make mistakes and send images or information that they later deeply regret and this is made worse by the lack of control over what happens next.

We would suggest that children stop and think before sending any image, gif, meme or piece of information via social media. Children can be encouraged to think:

• Would I want my family members to see this?

• Would I be able to explain why I sent or kept this?

• Could this cause someone to be upset, worried or frightened?

• Would I be happy if someone did this to me / sent this to me or kept this information about me?

Social media and mental health

Many children and young people turn to social media to explore their feelings. While it is helpful to be self-aware with thoughts and feelings and to explore things that may help, it can also mean that children can become overwhelmed by the vast amount of information they receive. So, what does this mean for children?

Information online can be contradictory which creates confusion for young people. Often the content online is designed for adults and so children do not yet have the experience to interpret what is helpful and what is not. Equally, often information presented on social media is simply opinion and so it is not fact checked, verified or tested.

Social media relies on advertising, algorithm, and on 'influencer' culture. This can mean that mental and emotional well-being is linked to wider unhelpful and pressurising ideas – buy this, achieve this, look like this, do this… algorithms will also mean that if a young person is in a negative cycle, social media will recommend and provide more and more similar content.

Immediate notifications, enabled location services, chat streaks and instant responses can lead children and young people to build unrealistic expectations about how available they should be to other people. Despite its ability to connect people it can lead to intense feelings of loneliness and pressure.

Many young people express a wish to validate their friends online but this can mean that children and young people who are already overwhelmed by social media may find it exceptionally difficult to 'step away' for fear that their friendship will be impacted. Stepping away in the real world then becomes far easier than stepping away in a virtual world of constant contact.

What can we do to help children and young people?

- Explore together with your child what social media means to them, is it fun and exciting or boring and draining?

- Take a guess at average screen times in your family. It can be interesting to explore what the equivalent would be. For example, spending 7 hours on social media is the equivalent of watching 4 football matches.

- Help children and young people understand that we all have a digital footprint, while this footprint can lead young people to develop their interests, get updates on their favourite things and follow content that they enjoy it can also have a negative impact if that footprint has contained searches, images or ideas that are distressing or worrying.

- Explore whether they would be happy with a friend, family member or teacher seeing the messages they send or the content they view.

- What are they doing on their phone? The only way to know is to ask and check.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

Catmose Primary recognise the importance of supporting our pupils' mental health and addressing issues which impact upon it.

Beginning a new school year can be a time of anticipation and worry for many pupils as they adjust to their new routine, get to grips with Primary expectations and come into contact with new people and places.

More recently there has been a focus on the importance of communication and seeking help for challenging times and while this is certainly important, there are also some brilliant basics that are often overlooked:

Eat well: a steady supply of diverse foods which are nutrient rich positively impacts not only our physical body but our ability to regulate and sustain our mood. To achieve this, it is important that children eat regularly (especially breakfast) and bring a water bottle to school so that they can keep hydrated.

Sleep: changes in sleep can be one of the first indicators that our minds and bodies may be struggling so it is helpful to try and keep a sleep routine as much as possible. A sleep routine not only helps us to monitor changes but it provides our brains and bodies with important signals about rest and repair. Getting good quality sleeps helps with memory, attention, decision making and in coping with daily challenges and changes. One of the biggest factors for quality sleep is optimising a sleeping environment which is quiet, calm and free from devices.

Fresh air: whether walking to the shops or spending time at the park, getting out into fresh air and moving our bodies is central to well-being. Fresh air raises the level of oxygen to our brains and raises mood-boosting hormones such as serotonin.

Relaxation without screens: constant exposure to information, lights and sounds can lead our minds and bodies to feel overwhelmed and overstimulated. By reducing time on screens, we can reduce stress and anxiety and increase the time spent having quality time by ourselves or with the people who are most important to us.

Hobbies and interests: hobbies and interests have a huge impact on our mental health simply because we are engaging in something we find enjoyable and rewarding. Hobbies and interests can be useful distractions as well as fantastic ways to enhance our self-esteem.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL HELP:

Whatever your experience or situation, your Local Authority is a great place to find additional help and support for your child and family. Early Help and Family Help teams in particular offer a great range of support services.

The Local Authority for your area will also have a range of services available for children aged 0-19 and their families. For more information about the Local Authority where you live, please follow the weblinks below.

Rutland County Council:

https://www.rutland.gov.uk/rutland-information-service/send-local-offer/support-families

Leicestershire County Council:

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/where-to-start-with-send/what-is-the-local-offer

Lincolnshire County Council:

https://www.lincsfamilydirectory.org.uk/kb5/lincs/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=2

Northamptonshire County Council:

https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/