WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

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Safeguarding links

- Catmose Primary Child Protection Policy - http://www.catmoseprimary.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Primary-Pupil-Child-Protection-Policy-September-2024-1.pdf
- Rutland and District Schools' Federation Safeguarding Policy - https://www.rutlandfederation.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Federation-Student-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2024-2.pdf

REPORT REMOVE:

Relationships are a natural part of growing up, however more frequently relationships are now developing online and over social media platforms which can lead to individuals engaging in sending or receiving explicit images, without thinking ahead of the potential consequences.

Sadly, children and young people continue to experience the negative consequences of sharing images and the impact can be felt for a considerable period of time with a significant impact on the day-to-day experience of school.

REPORT REMOVE

Nude image of you online? We can help take it down.

Childline has built a new tool designed called Report Remove which helps young people under18 in the UK to confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet.

For more information, please visit https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/

'ADD EVERYONE' – WHATSAPP ALERT:

Recent concerns have been highlighted regarding a WhatsApp group known as 'Add Everyone.' Schools and regional police forces across the UK have warned that this group exposes children and young people to explicit and harmful material.

 'Add Everyone' group chats can go by many names, but their purpose is often the same. These WhatsApp groups are spaces where children and young people are invited to join a chat that contains content such as sexual images, material promoting self-harm, sexual violence, racism and other inappropriate content. These groups are also often used to bully and marginalise children within the group.

The chats may be created by adults seeking to connect with younger users or by young people themselves as a seemingly fun activity. However, it is difficult to control who becomes a member of these groups, in some cases, the group owners ask for children to add their contacts to the group, 'except their parents'.

Why WhatsApp?

With 8 in 10 young people using WhatsApp by the time they have reached 16-17 years old; many potential victims are already on the platform. Additionally, WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption (E2EE) makes it particularly appealing for sharing inappropriate content. While these groups can exist on any social platform, this encryption ensures that only the sender and recipient can read messages—neither WhatsApp itself nor the police can access them. This means that inappropriate content shared within groups can be difficult to monitor and is only seen by authorities if a device is seized during a police investigation.

What are the risks?

Many of us routinely use WhatsApp to connect with our friends and families, which can build a false sense of security that this is a normal app where nothing can go wrong. However, all technology is influenced by the people who use or abuse it. These groups can present a number of risks to the children and young people who are invited to join, such as harmful and explicit content, sharing personal information and hate disguised as humour.

Next Steps and Further Advice:

Encourage Open Communication

Discussing online safety with young people doesn't have to feel like a chore. Approach the topic with curiosity and openness, and have regular conversations about what you hear in the news or what their friends are doing online. This can create a comfortable space for them to share, often making it easier for young people to open up about their own situations and enable you to encourage critical thinking.

Set Privacy Settings

Work with your child to set privacy settings that ensure only their contacts can add them to groups and view their information. Remind them that friends can still add them to group chats, so discuss how to handle invitations they receive.

Adjust Auto-Saving Settings

WhatsApp can automatically save images to the user's camera roll unless adjusted in the settings. This could lead to young people unintentionally storing harmful or illegal images sent in group chats.

Screenshot, Report, and Block

If a young person is added to an inappropriate group chat, take a screenshot of the evidence* and report it directly to the platform. Encourage them to block any concerning users and to speak to a trusted adult or an organisation like Childline on 0800 1111. *NEVER screenshot an indecent image of a child.
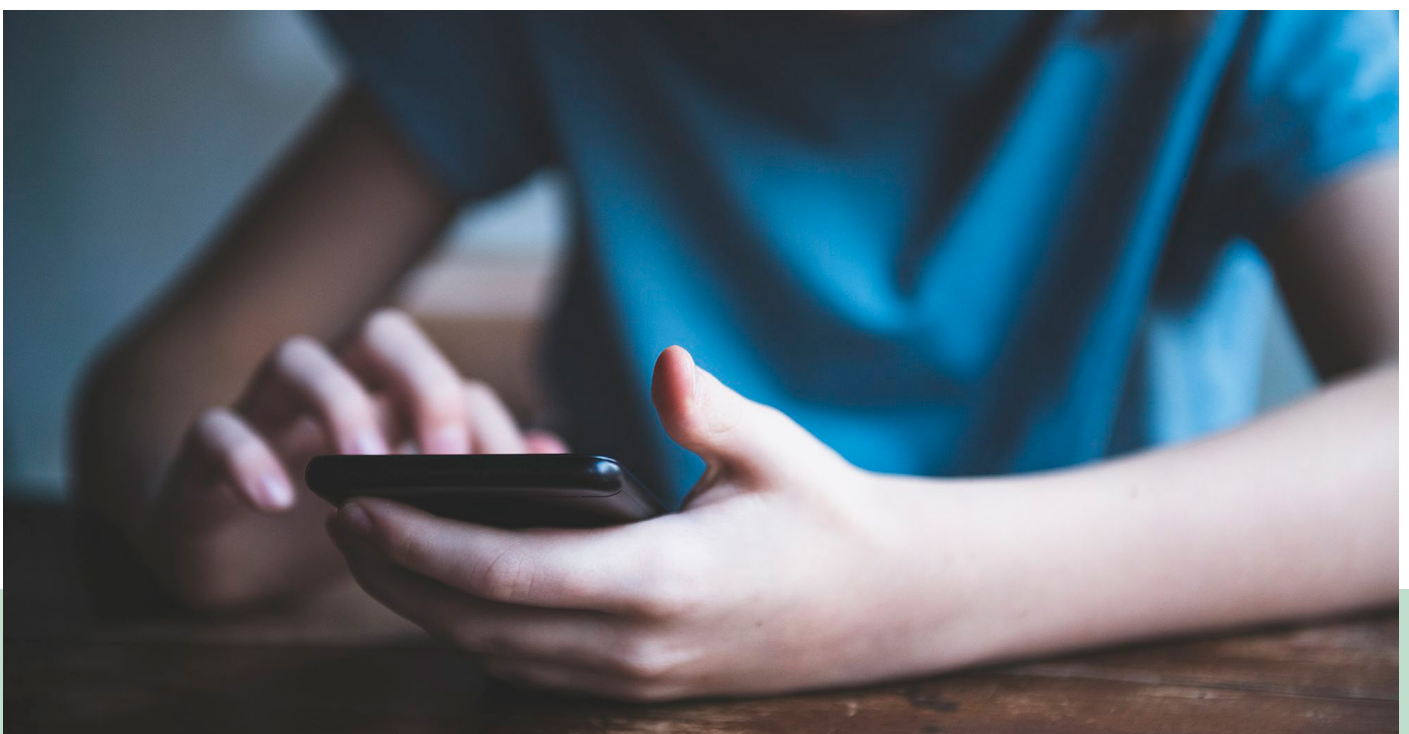
PREVENT

The Prevent duty requires education providers to have due regard to help prevent the risk that young people may be exploited by those with extreme views and who may place children and young people at risk of radicalisation.

The Prevent duty is just one strand of the counter terrorism strategy known as CONTEST.

Educational providers and settings have a critical part to play, serving arguably the most vulnerable and impressionable members of society. In order to promote the prevent duty and safeguard children and young people we:

- use robust safeguarding policies to ensure that those at risk of radicalisation are identified and appropriate support is provided.
- follow our duty to share information.
- have measures in place to prevent our facilities and resources being exploited by those seeking to radicalise others. This includes considerable monitoring of the use of IT equipment and network filters as part of their overall strategy to prevent people from becoming involved in, or supporting, extremism.
- undertake significant suitability and pre-employment checks for all staff in contact with children and young people.

What are British Values?

'Extremism' was defined in the 2011 Prevent strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values. These values are:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

What does this mean in practice?

These values are implicitly implied throughout the statutory frameworks in England and Wales as practitioners value and promote equality and diversity and prepare children for life in modern Britain. It is expected that practitioners do this in an age-appropriate way to help children to reflect on their differences and understand what makes them unique. Practitioners do this by:

- teaching children to be respectful and to recognise those who help us, and contribute positively to society
- developing children's understanding of British values
- developing children's understanding and appreciation of diversity
- celebrating what we have in common
- routinely challenging stereotypical behaviours and promoting respect for different people.

Here are some examples of what the promotion of British Values in education means in practice:

Democracy: making decisions together, for example giving opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

Rule of law: understanding rules matter as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development for example collaborating with children to create rules and codes of behaviour.

Individual liberty: freedom for all, for example reflecting on their differences and understanding we are free to have different opinions

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated, for example sharing and respecting other's opinions.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH BEREAVEMENT:

It can be a difficult process navigating through the death of someone close to you. For adults this process, whilst painful, can be dealt by using the coping mechanisms we all develop through our early years. That first experience with bereavement, is a necessary but extremely painful experience, which will produce resilient adults. However, it is a process that must be dealt with sensitively. For students, the first death will likely be a grandparent or other older family member, individuals that usually have played an important role in the formative years of that child or young person.

Since the processing of death is an intensely private thing for adults, it may not be obvious how to support someone experiencing it for the first time.

For more information, please follow the links:

- My Self-Referral https://www.myselfreferral-llr.nhs.uk/health/anything-else-not-covered/
- Cruse Bereavement Support https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/be-involved/vcse-introduction/vcse-alliance/vcse-directory/cruse-bereavement-support/
- The Laura Centre https://thelauracentre.org.uk/

MANAGING ANXIETY

Many children and young people will experience anxiety to some degree over the course of their school career. Anxiety, while a distressing and uncomfortable state is also very necessary as it helps to keep us safe.

Anxiety and the sensation of 'fight or flight' can mean that we leave situations of danger, we are cautious of strangers, we do not approach dangerous animals and much more.

Of course, anxiety can sometimes occur at unhelpful times and our 'fight and flight' instinct can sometimes get confused and lead us to respond to things that are not dangerous or threatening.

There are a range of self-help materials available to children and parents who would like further information and support:

- Family Help Services at Rutland County Council: 'Fear Less' online course.
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- NSPCC: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/
- Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/how-to-get-help-and-support/useful-contacts/

Top Tips:

Be wary of avoidance. Anxiety naturally leads to avoidance and while this may create a temporary sense of relief, avoidance is particularly unhelpful as it teaches us that avoidance is rewarding, it prevents children from understanding that they can manage situations that feel uncomfortable or even frightening. Avoidance is a behaviour which naturally grows and emerges in other areas and it can them become a 'cycle'.

Promote small steps. Breaking an anxious situation down into manageable stages can help us to gain a greater sense of control and to structure a situation so that we know what to expect. Of course, it is not always possible to predict what will happen but encouraging children and young people to manage in the moment with small steps is helpful.

Practice makes perfect. Some children may find it helpful to practice how to manage anxious situations. For example, some children may need to practice their routine multiple times before doing it independently. Children who experience anxiety in social situations may need some help to practice having small conversations or to practice 'short bursts' in louder or busier environments. The goal being that with time, children can either manage and tolerate their feelings of anxiety or the anxiety slowly begins to dissipate as they recognise that the anxious situation is not as bas as they initially thought.

Challenge the anxious thought. This does not mean telling someone that their anxious thought is wrong, rather it is about being curious as to what informs their experience. Asking questions can be a helpful way of supporting children to re-focus away from negative experience and towards positive experiences:

"I wonder if there has ever been a time when you faced a difficult situation but you managed it well?"

"How do you think you might feel after managing this situation? Perhaps you might feel proud or surprised, relieved…"

"Imagine that this situation goes well for you, what would you need to happen? What can you do to make this happen?"

"This sounds like a difficult situation, what are the things we need to practice to help you feel more confident about it?"