Safeguarding Newsletter Term 2

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

SAFEGUARDING

Welcome to the second safeguarding newsletter of the year!

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly this term goes. After the long summer holiday, the Autumn feels like it will stretch on and on but, before we know it, the new children are settled, confident and happy and some amazing work has appeared on the walls around the school.

With the evenings drawing in and the various Christmas festivities in full swing, I am sure many minds will be turning towards the Christmas holidays, which start next week. Whilst this time of year can be exciting, we know that for many it can also be challenging for many reasons.

Please remember that we are here to support all of our families, but particularly those who may find the coming months difficult. Do get in touch with me or anyone in the school if there is anything we can do to make it easier. From financial assistance with foodbank vouchers to a bit of moral support and a listening ear, we will be available. Equally, if there is anything we can do to support any children who are struggling, please let us know.

Who can you speak to?

If you have a concern about any child in our school, then it is your responsibility to say something to us. Remember, 'Safeguarding' is everybody's responsibility!

You can speak to any member of staff in school. We also have a team of designated safeguarding leads - Mr Champs (DSL), Mrs Mann (DDSL), Miss Speller (DDSL) and our School Safeguarding governor, Mrs Phippen.

They can be contacted on 01934 623430 or office@kewstokeprimaryschool.co.uk

If you are concerned about a child, and would like to contact someone for support
Immediate danger - dial 999 and ask for the Police
Concerns for possible abuse or general advice - contact Care Connect by either phone on 01275 888 808 or email care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk

Useful Safeguarding Acronyms and Vocabulary

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead
MASH: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub CP: Child Protection
CiN: Child in Need
FPT: Family Partnership Team
TAF: Team Around the Family
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 in to extremism
CAMHs: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CHUMS: Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
SEND: Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Why do we need to have the conversation?

'A million jobs in London could be changed by AI'

OpenAI's Sam Altman: 'AI could surpass human intelligence by 2030'

'Very scary': Mark Zuckerberg's pledge to build advanced AI alarms experts

Meta CEO accused of being 'irresponsible' by considering making tools on par with human intelligence open source

Will AI make work burnout worse?

While the benefits of AI cannot be dismissed or disputed, there are significant concerns about the negative impacts that go alongside this as with much of the technology that has become so integral to our everyday lives, particularly when it comes to safeguarding our children. The fact that AI is evolving so rapidly can be quite daunting and we are all having to learn very quickly.

Here are some key things to remember:

Definition and Technology Behind Deepfakes

What are Deepfakes?
Deepfakes are manipulated digital content using advanced AI-based machine learning techniques to create convincing images, videos and audio where the content subject is not real or present. They are used to propagate disinformation and fake news or for entertainment purposes.

Types of Deepfakes

Face-swapping is a type of deepfake that involves replacing a person's face in an existing video or image with someone else's face.

Voice cloning is a type of deepfake that involves creating a synthetic voice that sounds like a real person's voice. It is used to create fake audio and video recordings.

So what?

Synthetic media is a type of deepfake that involves creating completely new content using AI and machine learning. It is used to create realistic-looking but completely fake images and videos.
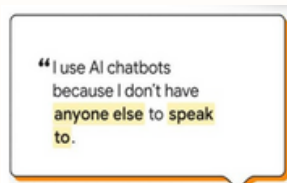
Personal and emotional damage

Deepfakes can cause significant personal and emotional damage, leading to reputational harm, trauma and loss of privacy. Victims of deepfakes may experience anxiety, depression and social isolation.

Political and misinformation risks

Deepfakes pose a severe threat to democracy and political stability, allowing malicious actors to spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion. This can lead to the erosion of trust in institutions and undermine the democratic process.

Some statistics

- 64% of UK children (aged 9- 17) have used an AI chatbot with use rapidly increasing over the last 18 months.
- The most popular are ChatGPT (43%), Google Gemini (32%) and Snapchat's My AI (31%).
- Vulnerable children (those with SEN, EHCPs or mental/physical health conditions) use them even more frequently (71%).
- 12% of users overall, and 23% of vulnerable children, use chatbots because they have no-one else to talk to. Some refer to chatbots with gendered pronouns and treat them like friends.
- 58% of 9-12 year olds use AI chatbots despite most platforms setting a minimum age of 13.
- Age checks are minimal or easily bypassed, often just self-declaration.
- In user testing, chatbots exposed under-18 accounts to explicit sexualised or misogynistic content during sign up or conversations.

"I use AI chatbots because I don't have anyone else to speak to.

New devices, new apps, safe starts

As Christmas approaches, many families are planning to surprise their children with a new phone, tablet, or gaming device under the tree. It's an exciting time - new technology opens doors to creativity, learning and connection. But it also brings a fresh set of questions about what apps and online spaces children might explore.

With so many options available, it's natural to wonder which apps are suitable for children and how to ensure they have positive experiences online. To help families navigate these decisions, here is a closer look at some of the most concerning apps and platforms.

Reddit
What is it?
Reddit is an extensive online discussion platform with 'Subreddits' on various topics.
What are the risks?
It features unmoderated or explicit content, including adult themes and misinformation. Users can privately chat with others through comments or direct messages.

Kik
What it is?
A messaging app that allows users to send texts, photos and videos without linking to a phone number - only a username is needed.
What are the risks?
Kik has minimal age verification and a reputation for anonymous interactions. Children can be contacted by strangers and messages can't easily be monitored.

Telegram
What it is?
A messaging service known for encrypted chats and large group channels, often used for community discussions or file sharing.
What are the risks?
Telegram's 'secret chats' and disappearing messages make it difficult for parents to supervise activity. Some public groups share mature or illegal content.

Vault apps
What they are?
Apps designed to hide photos, videos or other apps behind a disguised icon or password. Some look like calculators or utilities.
What are the risks?
Used to conceal messages or content. If you notice one installed, it's worth having an open conversation rather than assuming wrongdoing - curiosity often drives their use.

How to choose child friendly apps:

01 Explore together
Look at new apps with your child before downloading. Ask what they like and talk about what feels safe to use.

02 Check beyond the age rating
App store ratings aren't always enough - read reviews and see what kinds of chats, ads or purchases are involved.

03 Choose creative options
Favour apps that help children build, draw, learn or create rather than just scroll or chat.

04 Set up safety tools together
Turn on privacy settings, block in-app purchases and set screen time limits as a team.

05 Keep talking
Ask regularly what apps they're using and how they feel about them. Open chats build trust and awareness.

Giving devices safely this Christmas

Getting a new device for Christmas is exciting - it can open a world of learning, creativity and connection. But it also introduces children to a digital world that isn't always designed with their safety in mind. Setting clear boundaries and protective measures early on helps children learn to use technology in healthy, balanced and age-appropriate ways.

Without guidance, young users can stumble into areas of concern: social media platforms that encourage comparison and oversharing gaming chats that expose them to strangers or apps that collect more personal data than you might expect. These risks don't mean children shouldn't enjoy their new devices - they simply mean they need structure and support to navigate them confidently.

Here are some ways to make sure your child's first steps with a new device are positive ones:

1. Set it up before it gets wrapped.

2. Agree on clear expectations.

3. Talk about social media early.

4. Guide them through gaming safely.

5. Keep passwords and downloads shared.

6.Encourage balance.