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Dear Paul

I hope you are having a lovely week. Just a few updates for you this week, no surprise as things generally tend to slow down as we move through December.

Updates

- Amnesty International - TikTok study.
- Resource for 9-13 year olds - Tell someone you trust.
- WhatsApp - locked chats.
- For parents - why do children use anonymous apps?

Amnesty International - TikTok Study

Now and again I'm asked whether these types of report are relevant to Primary schools and the answer is yes, definitely. Don't forget, to use most social platforms you have to state that you are 13 or older. Even if you're a Year 4 aged child, to that platform you are at least 13 years of age.

There have been countless concerns over recent years in relation to algorithms and the type of content that is fed to children and young people across the various platforms they use. This latest study from Amnesty International delves deeply into the very significant concerns around the algorithms used within TikTok specifically in relation to self-harm, where children who signal an interest into mental health are quickly led down rabbit holes of some very disturbing content which can heighten risk, exacerbate an existing vulnerability or act as a trigger. Quote - When you 'heart' a sad video that you could relate to, suddenly my whole 'For You' page is sad and I'm in a sadtok. It affects how I'm feeling - unquote.

The report is quite big but you will find a lot of useful information in the executive summary which can also be used to help with conversation starters with students. The full report is [HERE](#) and there is an accompanying report about the massive amount of personal/private information collected by TikTok called 'I feel Exposed' [HERE](#).

Resource for 9-13 Year Olds - Tell Someone You Trust

This is a short, animated video which was released at the end of 2015 in 21 languages to inform children aged 9-13 about sexual violence committed in the circle of trust and how to speak against it. Although the resource isn't specifically online safety, it can be used as part of a wider talk with children including online aspects. You can find the video in all 21 languages [HERE](#).

WhatsApp - Locked Chats

Did you know that you can hide conversations and lock them away in WhatsApp? This was a feature introduced in May 2023 and was easy to spot (if you knew how), but WhatsApp have updated the feature which makes it much more difficult to find.

In the original update you had to swipe down in the 'Chats' window to see locked chats, then input a code, fingerprint or Face ID to unlock (see [THIS](#) 1 minute video on YouTube). However, this meant that other people (parents, teachers, partners) would be able to see that you have got locked chats, even if you can't see the content. WhatsApp have just updated this (being rolled out worldwide from the beginning of December) and

locked chats can now only be viewed by entering a secret code into the search bar, meaning that you will not be able to tell if there are any locked chats without knowing the code which WhatsApp briefly explains [HERE](#).

For Parents - Why do Children use Anonymous Apps?

Note: the article refers to Omegle which no longer exists but it explores the wider use of anonymous apps. Also, the article refers to teens. In my experience many younger children use anonymous apps.

This is an interesting article from Internet Matters where young people talk about why they use anonymous apps, which ones they use, the risks and how they stay safe. You can find the full article [HERE](#).

Online Safety Training for Staff, Parents and Students

Online Safety Subscription Service

Half-termly video for school staff.

Half-termly PDF newsletter for parents.

Keeping staff and parents up to date with online safety risks and issues can be really time consuming. This subscription service does the work for you in a flexible, cost-effective way with a half-termly 10-15 minute video for staff and a newsletter for parents. Full details plus costs can be found [HERE](#).

Online Safety Leads Course

The OSL course goes into much greater detail for those staff (e.g. DSL's, Computing Leads) who have a more involved responsibility for online safety in relation to curriculum, policy, management, risks and harm, filtering and monitoring and much more. You can see more details on the new platform [HERE](#).

Online Safety Training (staff, parents and students)

As well as physical in-school training (staff, students, parents) and virtual (Zoom/Teams) I also offer cost-effective pre-recorded video training as follows (each purchase includes a 12 month licence to use as many times as you wish within your setting):

STAFF

There is a primary version plus a secondary/college version, the most recent videos were updated and re-recorded at the end of August 2023 to make sure they're right up to date. They take staff through the risk basics (content, contact, conduct and commerce), the spaces that children occupy online (games, YouTube and social media) plus the latest risks and issues with supporting advice and guidance. The video can be streamed or downloaded to the school network.

If you would like to see a sampler video you can access the 4-minute introduction [HERE](#).

Cost: £95.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

PARENTS

The days of parents online safety evenings were often a struggle to get parents to attend, so I have created a series of 7 short videos for parents. On purchase, I will send you a MS Word document. This document contains the text, supporting links and video links for 7 emails (or other school communication) which you just need to copy, paste and send out to parents at a frequency of your choice (e.g. one a week). You are also welcome to add your own text.

Cost: £149.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

GOVERNORS/TRUSTEES

This video, recorded in Aug 2023, is similar to the staff video but from a governance context. Lasting for just over an hour it covers what online safety means, the risk categories, the online lives of children/young people, followed by a few simple questions that governors can consider with advice and guidance.

Cost: £95.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

SECONDARY STUDENTS

This is a series of 10 videos, each of which are short (between 8 and 12 minutes) covering a range of different topics. These are ideal for showing in assembly to promote further classroom discussion/debate or within the classroom to go deeper into the topic. You will be able to download these videos for future use, or even use for virtual learning by sharing the link with students. The cost is £179 (plus VAT) for all the videos, not each. Full details and a sample video can be found [HERE](#).

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