SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Our Promise at Madeley School

Madeley School recognises its legal duty under Education Act 2002 (section 157 in relation to independent schools and academies) and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all pupils.

The school recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations. Safeguarding incidents can happen anywhere and staff should be alert to any concerns being raised. All staff may raise safeguarding concerns directly with Children's Social Care Services (see making referrals section of this policy).

Welcome to our first newsletter of the academic year. In this edition we would like to focus primarily on online safety and also remind you of our safeguarding team here at Madeley School.

Our safeguarding team

Mr Hope
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Officer

Mrs Skelding
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Officer

Mrs Halstead
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Officer

Mrs Bousted
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Officer

If you have a concern about any student of Madeley High please phone the school reception and ask for

- Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer: Lee Hope (lee.hope@madeley.set.org)

- Deputy Safeguarding Leads: alexa.skelding@madeley.set.org /
  sara.halstead@madeley.set.org / emma.bousted@madeley.set.org

- You can also speak to any of the safeguarding team highlighted above on the main school number.

A practical guide for parents and carers whose children use social media

Social media is hugely popular. For many young people growing up with technology and the internet, online life and offline life is just life.

But social media, like all forms of public communication, comes with some risks. Not all of these risks turn into actual problems; and if children never face any risks, they never learn how to deal with them. By helping your child understand what the risks are, you can play a big part in preventing them from turning into problems.

The aim of this newsletter is to give you some practical advice and tips on how you can support your child in being safe online. You will also see we have given you some further support resources you can go to for additional information.

The risks you need to be aware of:

- **cyberbullying (bullying using digital technology)**
- **invasion of privacy.**
- **identity theft.**
- **your child seeing offensive images and messages.**
- **the presence of strangers who may be there to 'groom' other members.**

Technology can move very fast, for parents and carers it can often be hard to keep up with all the new developments, particularly social media sites. Communicating with your child regularly is often the best way to keep up to date. For those of you with teenagers, this is often the first challenge!

Communication

Talking regularly and making it part of daily conversation, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed. It also means when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you.
But it can also be easy to become overwhelmed with the different technology, the language that children use, the huge number of games and apps which are available and the potential risks.

A big factor to consider when we're talking to children is age or cognitive ability, which also impacts on the language we use and what we can talk about. As children get older, their needs and behaviour will change, particularly as children are moving through their teenage years and are more prone to risk-taking, mood swings or whether they will even talk to you about something that they may be embarrassed or ashamed about.

There is some really good advice and guidance on the NSPCC website about how to approach a difficult conversation with your child:

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/talking-about-difficult-topics/

By learning about what sites they are using, helps you to then understand the potential risks they may face and discuss with them how to deal with them should they arise.

Tips for keeping your child safe on social media

- Location settings: Remind them, and explain why, they shouldn't share location on posts, or public forums and chats, videos or with people they don't know. If they share their location publicly, it can be seen by people they don't know.
- Know the safety and privacy settings: This will help you decide upon the right ones to use for your child, and remember each app is slightly different in how you set up an account! Explain why these are important to your child.
- Age ratings: Make sure you are aware of the age ratings for the app your child is using, as many have a minimum age of 13.

Protecting your child from explicit content

Tools like parental controls can help to protect your children from accessing inappropriate content, but you can't check everything they see on the internet.

- Many sites have a minimum age limit of 13, explain to your child they the age limits are there to protect them from unsuitable content.
- Agree ground rules with your child. Agree what sites they can use and you can set Google search and YouTube to safe search modes. If you are unsure what sites they should and should not be accessing, speak with other parents what they are doing or school for advice.
- Age verification is now needed for commercial porn sites, this involves providing credit card details to verify they are 18 years or older.
- Be calm and reassuring. If they come across anything that upsets them online, they can talk to a trusted adult.

There are some good tips and a great training video for parents and carers on the following website:

https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/inappropriate-content/protect-your-child/

Identity theft

Children, even toddlers and infants, are at risk of identity theft. In fact, **kids under the age of 18** are 51 times more likely to become victims of identity theft than their parents.

- Ensure that online files are saved on devices that are <u>password-protected</u> and contain the latest anti-virus software.
- Teach your child what personal information is and how they can keep it private. For example, they shouldn't share details like their real name, date of birth or passwords with anyone, including on social media and gaming platforms.
- If your child wants to buy something online, you may want to do it for them. This way, you can ensure that secure, reputable websites are used.

If you know or suspect that your child's identity has been stolen, you can report it to <u>Action Fraud</u>, the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime. You'll receive a police crime reference number.

Cyberbullying

What is it?

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Tips

It is important to talk to your child. What people call "bullying" is sometimes an argument between two people. But if someone is repeatedly cruel to you, that's bullying and you mustn't blame yourself. No one deserves to be treated cruelly. Reassure them that it is not their fault.

Encourage your child not to respond or retaliate. Sometimes a reaction is exactly what aggressors are looking for because they think it gives them power over you, and you don't want to empower a bully. As for retaliating, getting back at a bully turns you into one – and can turn one mean act into a chain reaction. If you can, remove yourself from the situation. If you can't, sometimes humor disarms or distracts a person from bullying.

The only good news about bullying online or on phones is that it can usually be captured, saved, and shown to someone who can help. You can save that evidence in case things escalate.

Most social media apps and services allow you to block the person. Whether the harassment's in an app, texting, comments or tagged photos, encourage them to do this. You can also report the problem to the service.

Talk to your child about not sharing their passwords with anyone – even their closest friends, who may not be close forever – and password-protect their phone so no one can use it to impersonate them.

As school, we have a culture where it is clear bullying will not be tolerated and encourage our students to talk to someone if they have a problem. For example, form tutors, our pastoral team, safeguarding team and all staff who work at school. We have a whole-school approach to preventing and tackling bullying. This includes bullying that happens outside school and online. Please contact us if you are concerned.

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/cyberbullying-advice-for-parents-and-carers

Further reading:

There is a great deal of support for parents, giving helpful advice and tips on how to help keep your child safe online, including children who are SEND. We have listed below a range of websites you can access this information:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online

https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/mental-health-wellbeing/online-safety-wellbeing/keep-teenager-safe-online/

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/post/ways-to-keep-your-teen-safe-online

https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/

https://eephonesmart.co.uk/

https://eephonesmart.co.uk/kids/

Further support for your child's wellbeing

If you have a child who is struggling with their wellbeing and needs to talk to someone when away from school, please use the contacts below:
North Staffordshire urgent mental health helpline: call 0800 0 328 728 option 1 (covers Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs Moorlands).

Advice for children & their families, from early help support through to safeguarding call Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service on 0300 111 8007

For mental health support:
Visyon Call 01260 290000, out of hours support The Staffordshire Crisis Team on 0300 123 0907

Samaritans www.samaritans.org

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

For help with any sort of worry, big or small:

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline www.childline.org.uk