

Summer Holiday Safety



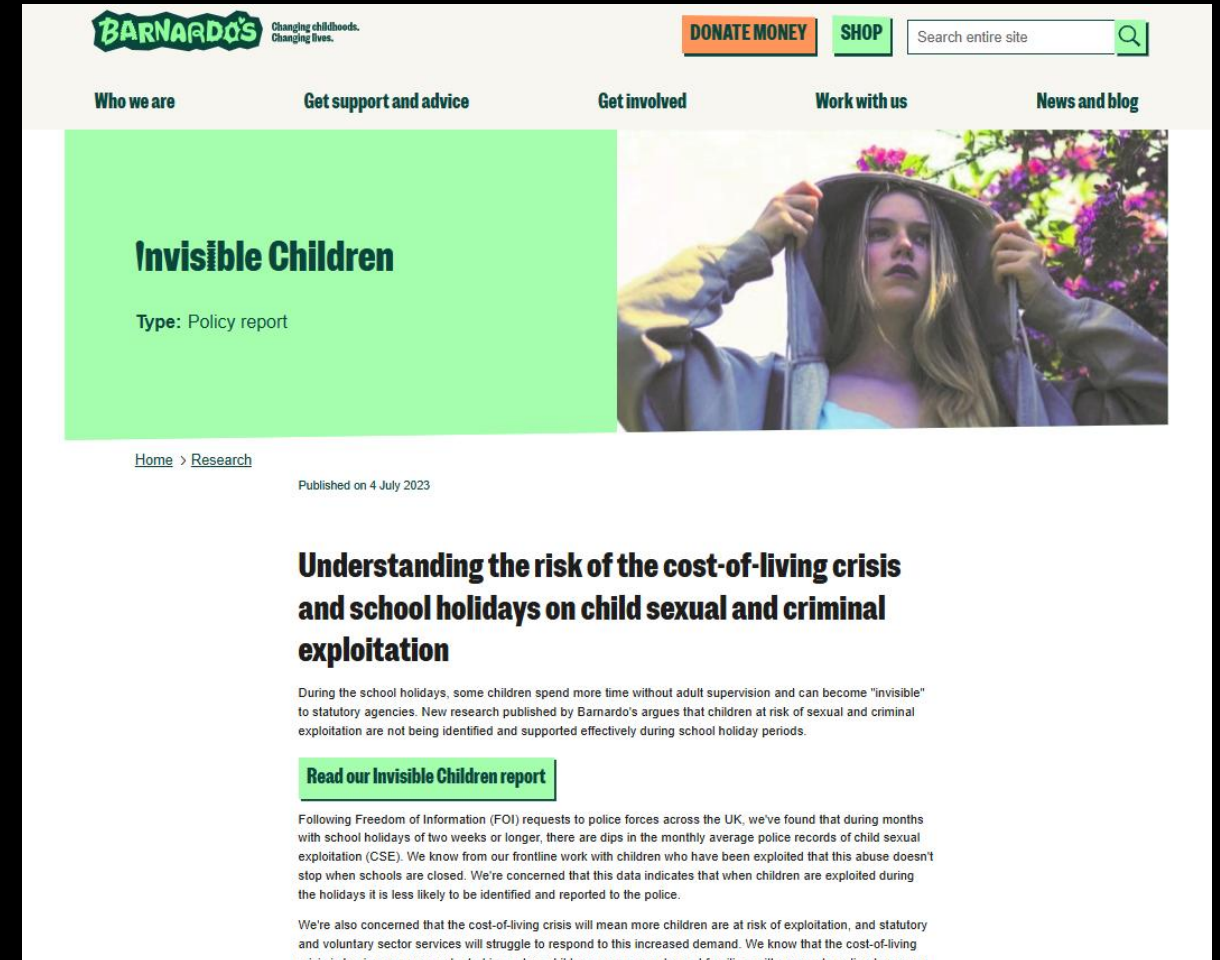
A Guide for Parents of Young Children at Yorkmead

Six Weeks Without the SafetyNet of School

Schools are one of the main places where concerns about children's welfare are noticed and acted upon.

During the summer break, children spend more time online, outdoors, near water and away from trusted professionals. Some safeguarding risks increase, while other concerns may become harder to identify.

This is why parental awareness and supervision are especially important during the summer months.



The screenshot shows the Barnardo's website header with the logo and tagline 'Changing childhoods. Changing lives.' Navigation links include 'Who we are', 'Get support and advice', 'Get involved', 'Work with us', and 'News and blog'. There are buttons for 'DONATE MONEY' and 'SHOP', and a search bar. The main content area features a green box with the title 'Invisible Children' and the subtitle 'Type: Policy report'. To the right is a photograph of a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a grey hoodie, looking upwards. Below the title, there is a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Research' and a publication date 'Published on 4 July 2023'. The main heading of the report is 'Understanding the risk of the cost-of-living crisis and school holidays on child sexual and criminal exploitation'. The introductory text states: 'During the school holidays, some children spend more time without adult supervision and can become "invisible" to statutory agencies. New research published by Barnardo's argues that children at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation are not being identified and supported effectively during school holiday periods.' A green button labeled 'Read our Invisible Children report' is present. The body text continues: 'Following Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to police forces across the UK, we've found that during months with school holidays of two weeks or longer, there are dips in the monthly average police records of child sexual exploitation (CSE). We know from our frontline work with children who have been exploited that this abuse doesn't stop when schools are closed. We're concerned that this data indicates that when children are exploited during the holidays it is less likely to be identified and reported to the police.' The final paragraph states: 'We're also concerned that the cost-of-living crisis will mean more children are at risk of exploitation, and statutory and voluntary sector services will struggle to respond to this increased demand. We know that the cost-of-living crisis is having an unprecedented impact on children, young people, and families, with many struggling to access...

Why this matters

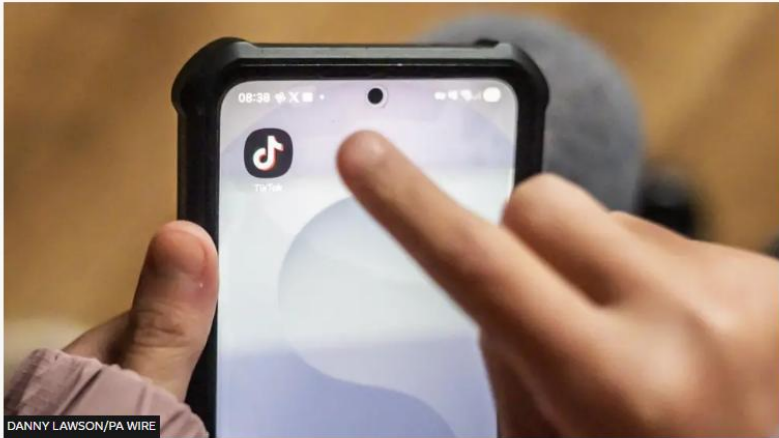
"Summer is an exciting time for children, but it also brings increased risks as routines change and children spend more time outdoors, online, and away from direct supervision."

NEWS

Home | UK | World | Business | Culture | Politics | Health | Tech | InDepth | BBC Verify | Climate

England | Local News

Under-16s social media ban: What parents need to know



DANNY LAWSON/PA WIRE

Technology minister Liz Kendall has described the ban as a "defining moment for our children"

Danielle Hunt
West of England

Heatwave drowning deaths reach 17 in UK after schoolgirl, 13, dies in river and mum drowns trying to save dog

The number of people who have died from water-related incidents since the beginning of the heatwave has risen to 17, with a 13-year-old girl and a 72-year-old woman among the victims



Water Safety

- Recent warm weather in the UK has sadly been linked to several drowning incidents involving children and young people. During hot weather, children are naturally drawn to rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs and beaches.

Important facts

- Cold water can cause shock even on hot days.
- Open water often contains hidden hazards.
- Strong currents may not be visible.
- Many incidents occur when children enter water unexpectedly or without supervision.

Water Safety

What school has done...

- In June, as part of our assembly and PSHE programme, all children in school were taught about open water safety through the resources available from the Royal Life Saving Society during 'Drowning Prevention Week'.



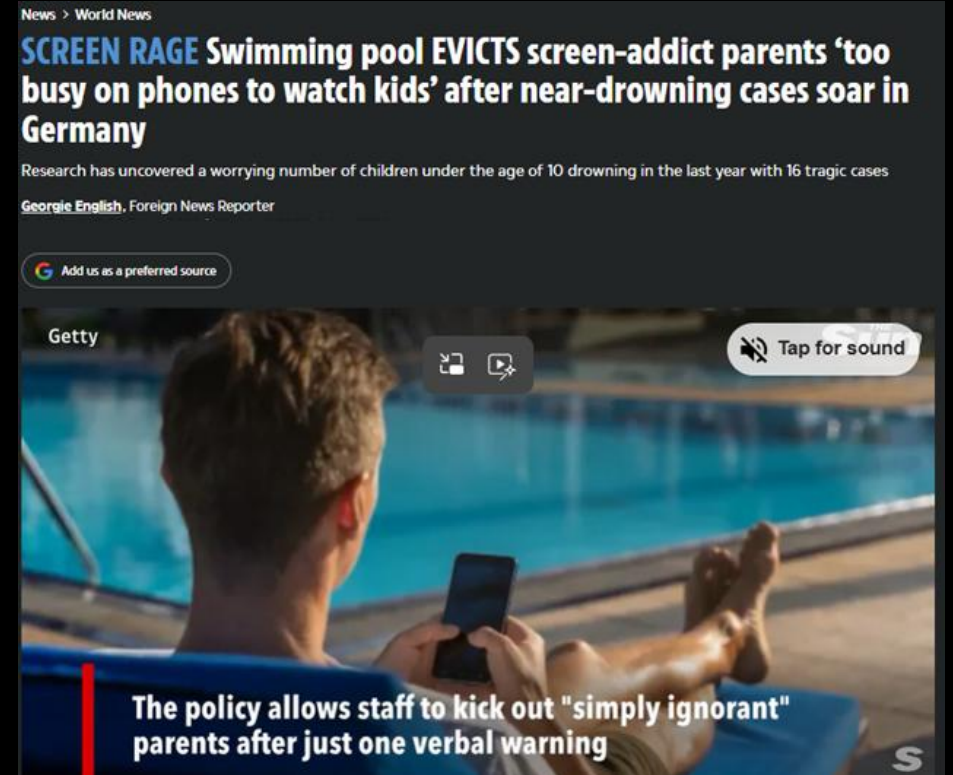
- [Royal Life Saving Society UK's Drowning Prevention Week](#)

What parents can do...

- Reinforce key points;
 - Never swim alone;
 - Only swim where it is permitted and supervised;
 - Do not jump into unknown water;
 - Stay away from reservoirs, canals, lakes and rivers;
 - If they are going out unsupervised, tell an adult where they are going and who they are going with.

On a Day Trip

- Stay within arm's reach of younger children;
- Put phones away when supervising near water - serious incidents have shown that around water, roads, and playgrounds, a few seconds of distraction can be enough for a life-changing accident to occur. Active supervision means being present, watching, and putting phones away when children are near water or other hazards.
- Have a designated adult who will watch children during a day trip – make responsibility explicit.
- Do not attempt a water rescue if not trained to do so – call 999 and ask for the coastguard (seaside) or Fire & Rescue (inland waters).



“Float to Live”

- Keep calm
- Lean back
- Extend your arms and legs like a starfish
- Gently move your arms and legs if needed
- Catch your breath
- Plan your next move – call for help and swim to safety if you can.
- Consider visiting Fox Hollies or another public supervised swimming pool to practice this with your children.
- [Float To Live – What To Do If You Fall In Water](#)



Online Safety During the Summer

- Increased risks in the long holidays as children may...
- Have fewer structured activities so...
- Spend more time online;
- Therefore, they are more likely to use devices unsupervised;
- More likely to play online games with strangers or access social media including video shorts.



Do you know how many hours your child spends online on a typical day in the holidays?

The proposed ban for under 16s...

- Why?
- Research supported concerns focus on four main areas.

Mental health and wellbeing

Concerns include:

- Anxiety and depression linked to excessive use.
- Constant comparison with others.
- Pressure around appearance and popularity.
- Fear of missing out (FOMO).

For primary-aged children, this is particularly relevant as many are encountering social media earlier than parents realise.

Exposure to harmful content

Children may encounter:

- Violent content.
- Self-harm content.
- Sexual content.
- Misinformation.
- Dangerous challenges and trends.

Younger children often lack the maturity to assess content and risks critically.

Online exploitation and grooming

Social media can provide access to children through:

- Direct messaging.
- Gaming platforms.
- Group chats.
- Live streaming.

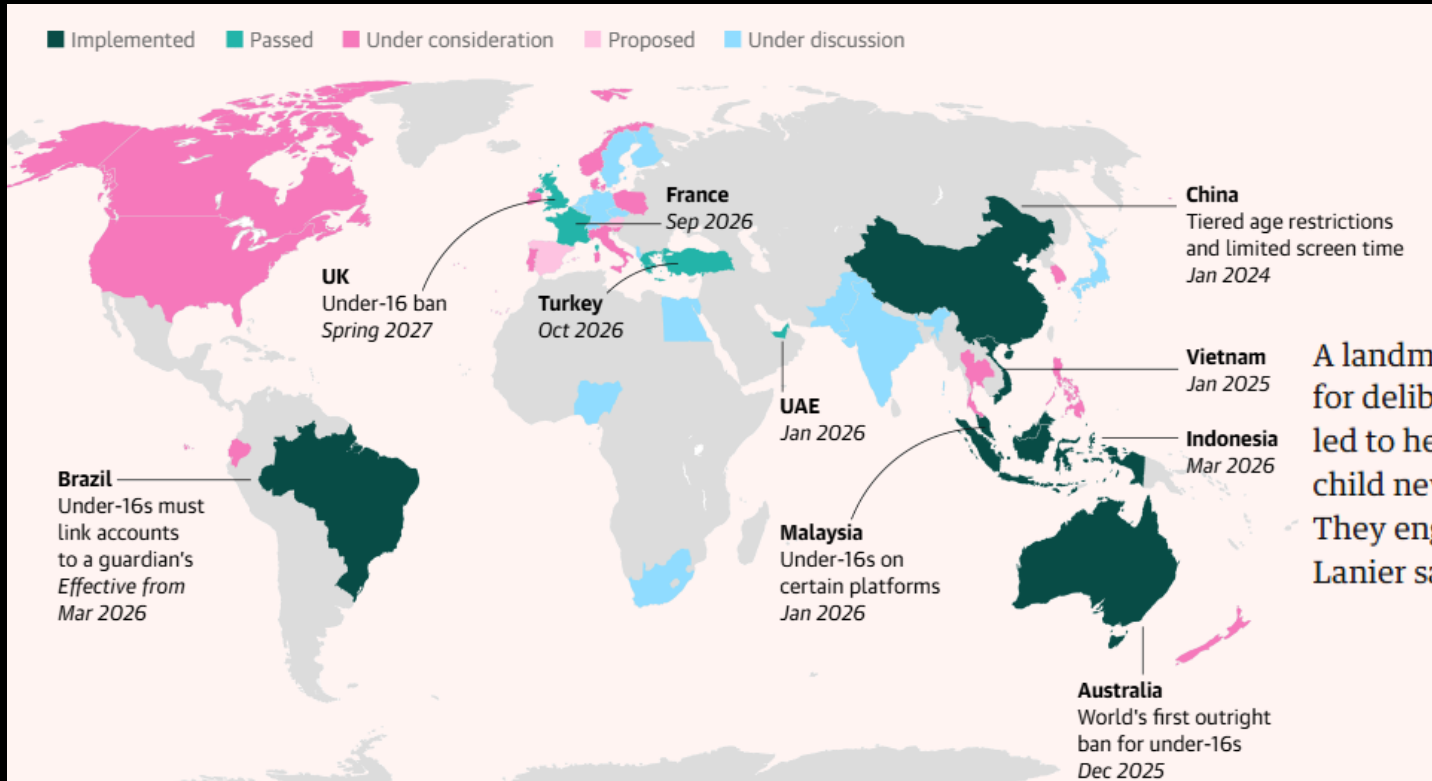
Safeguarding professionals identify unsupervised online communication as a significant risk factor.

Sleep, attention and development

Research consistently shows associations between excessive screen use and:

- Poor sleep.
- Reduced physical activity.
- Lower concentration.
- Reduced face-to-face social interaction.

The proposed ban for under 16s...



A landmark case in California, in which Meta and YouTube were found liable for deliberately designing addictive products that hooked a young user and led to her being harmed, was particularly damning. “How do you make a child never put down the phone? That’s called the engineering of addiction. They engineered it, they put these features on the phones,” the lawyer Mark Lanier said **during closing arguments**.

Whether or not parliament introduce this new law nationally, the summer holidays are a time when children typically spend significantly more time online. This increases the importance of parental awareness, conversations about online behaviour, and appropriate boundaries around devices and social media. Given what we now know about social media and short form video why would you wait for legislation to protect your child?

Online Safety – Practical Advice

Set clear expectations

- Agree screen-time limits.
- Keep devices out of bedrooms overnight.
- Know which apps and games children use.

Talk regularly about:

- Stranger contact.
- Sharing personal information.
- Inappropriate content.
- Cyberbullying.
- Online scams and gaming fraud.

Encourage:

- Children to tell a trusted adult if something online worries them.
- Open conversations without fear of punishment.



[NSPCC Online Safety Workshop for Parents and Carers](#)

The best online safety tools are supervision and ongoing conversation.

Playing Out Safely and Growing Independence

Summer is often when children begin spending more time outdoors with friends.

Before allowing independent play children should know:

- Home address.
- Parent/carer phone number.
- Safe routes and boundaries.
- What to do if they feel unsafe.

Agree:

- Where they can go.
- Who they can be with.
- What time they must return.
- How they will contact you.



Road, Bicycle and Scooter Safety:

- Wear helmets when cycling or scootering.
- Be visible.
- Follow road safety rules.
- Cross roads carefully, using pelican/zebra crossings if possible and avoid distractions.

Parents:

- Check bikes and scooters are roadworthy.
- Ensure helmets fit correctly.

Stranger Awareness and Community Safety



Teach children:

- Trust their instincts.
- Move away from situations that feel wrong.
- Seek help from trusted adults if worried.

Safe places:

- Shops
- Libraries
- Community centres
- Friends' homes (where agreed)

Avoid:

- Taking shortcuts through isolated areas.
- Entering unfamiliar houses or vehicles.
- Accepting gifts or lifts without parental permission.

Maintaining Healthy Summer Routines



Aim for:

- Consistent bedtimes.
- Regular meals.
- Daily physical activity.
- Reading opportunities.
- Family time.
- Time limited screen use.

Consider a simple weekly structure:

- Outdoor activity
- Reading time
- Household responsibility
- Social activity
- Family activity

Five Key Messages

1. Respect water

Never underestimate open water risks.

2. Understand and manage online habits

Know what children are doing, for how long and who they are talking to.

3. Build independence safely

Agree boundaries and safety plans.

4. Protect wellbeing

Keep healthy routines and sleep habits.

5. Keep talking

Open conversations are the strongest safety tool.



Resources

- UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk) Online safety advice and helpline (0808 800 5000).
- RNLI [Water Safety Advice And Tips - Know The Risks](#)
- Royal Life Saving Society Uk [Water Safety Advice](#)

