



# SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

## Summer Half-Term One 2024/25

It has been lovely to welcome the children back to school after the holidays. This half term, children will be receiving assemblies on healthy relationships, and information about how to keep safe in summer.

This newsletter contains information about an exciting new app for parents and carers to monitor their children's online activity. We understand that asking a child to see their phone can cause lots of resistance and conflict, but with this app, you are able to monitor their phones from your own device, therefore removing the potential challenge of asking your child to show you their phone. A welcome development, I'm sure!

Kind regards,  
Ms Jones and the Keep Kids Safe team.

## KEY NUMBERS

Anyone can contact the services below directly, regardless of whether you are a child, parent, carer or a member of staff. If you have a safeguarding concern, please ensure you pass it on: safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

<b>01925 443322</b> (Option one, followed by option one) <b>Warrington Multi-Agency Gateway (MAG)</b>  For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child	<b>01925 444400</b>  <b>Out of Office Emergency Duty Team</b>  For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child outside of office hours	<b>0808 800 5000</b>  <b>NSPCC</b>  For adults who are worried about a child
<b>0800 1111</b>  <b>Childline</b>  For children who are worried about their own safety or need some advice	<b>101</b>  <b>Police Non-Emergency</b>  For reporting any crimes or concerns	<b>999</b>  <b>Emergency Services</b>  For anyone in immediate danger (including if you are worried about the immediate risk to a child)



# Keeping Kids Safe



## Healthy Relationships

This half term, all children will receive assemblies on healthy relationships. This includes friendships as well as romantic relationships.

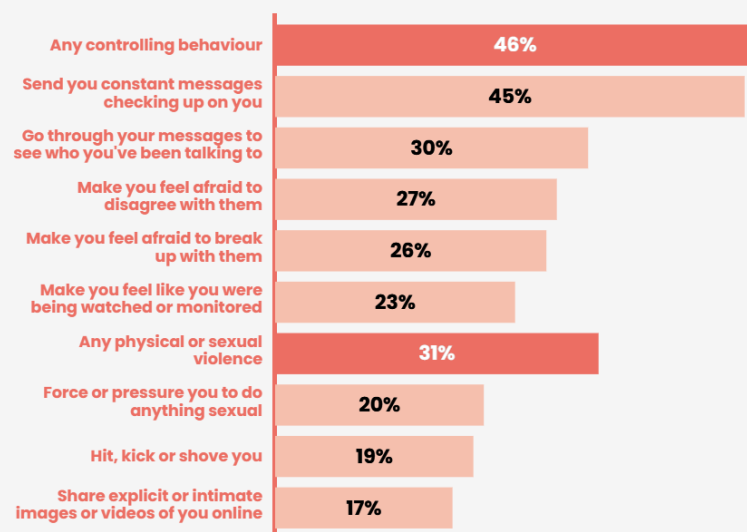
The Youth Endowment Fund recently completed some research on children witnessing violent behaviour. As part of this, they covered violent and controlling behaviour in teenage relationships. Their findings stated:

*"Of the teenage children we surveyed this year, 27% had been in a romantic relationship over the past year. Among these, nearly half (49%) have experienced violent or controlling behaviours from their partner.*

*Younger teens (aged 13-15) in relationships are significantly more likely to report violent or controlling experiences in their relationships (58%) than those aged 16-17 (42% of those in relationships).*

*Surprisingly, boys in relationships are more likely to say they experience violent or controlling behaviours (57%) compared to girls (41%)."*

### The proportion of children in relationships who've experienced violent and controlling behaviour



The full report can be found here: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2024/who-is-affected/>.

In assemblies, children will be presented with examples of healthy vs unhealthy relationship behaviours, as well as advice on how to remove themselves from unhealthy friendships/relationships.

The [NSPCC website](#) contains useful information for parents/carers regarding how to talk to children about healthy relationships, as well as how to spot the signs of an unhealthy relationship.

Children can also access the Childline website, which provides lots of information relating to various aspects of healthy relationships. These can be accessed below:



[Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships](#)  
[Advice for Young People Starting Relationships](#)  
[Sex and Consent](#)  
[Online Safety: Sexting and Nudes](#)



# Support Services



## Online Safety Hub

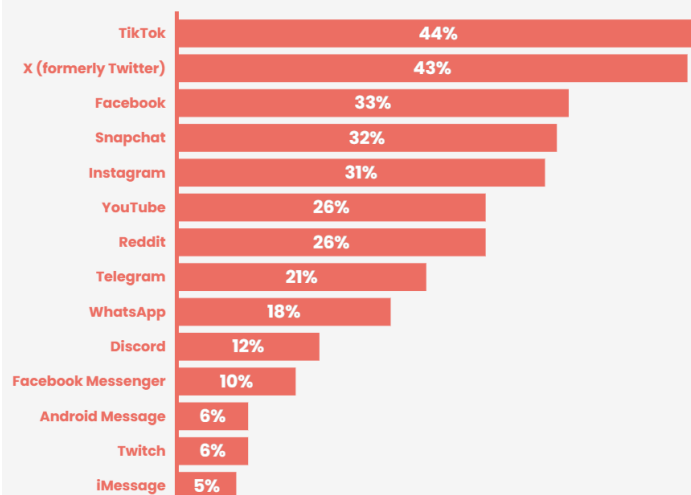
Warrington Borough Council have recently launched an online safety hub for all parents/carers in Warrington. The website includes lots of detailed information regarding internet safety for children, including advice for specific issues such as how to manage online bullying, implementing screen time boundaries, gaming and sleep routines.

There are also overviews of the apps that children use, including reviews of their safety and recommended age for use.

The online safety hub can be found here:

[Online Safety Hub](#)

**The proportion of children using social media platforms who have seen violent content**



Warrington Borough Council have also partnered with Qustodio, which is an app for parents/carers, enabling you to monitor your child's online activity from your own phone. The app also enables you to set screen time limits, monitor what your child is sending and receiving, and access expert advice on online safety. The partnership with Warrington Borough Council enables parents to access the app for free. Further information can be found here: [Qustodio Parent App](#)

## Early Help Drop-in

Our next drop-in session with our Early Help link practitioner will be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May between 9.30am – 12.30am. If any parents/carers would like to book an appointment between these times to discuss advice/next steps/support, please email [kjones@padgateacademy.co.uk](mailto:kjones@padgateacademy.co.uk).

## Youth in Mind Digital

In addition to the in-person drop-in Youth in Mind offer, Warrington Youthzone have recently launched Youth in Mind Digital, which enables children to access support from a location they are comfortable with. There is currently no waiting list for this service, however in order to access the service, they must be a member of the Youthzone. Youth In Mind Digital can be delivered to young people via Teams call, phone or e-mail depending on their preference. The young person will be supported through weekly one-to-one sessions for up to an hour at an allocated time, exploring various wellbeing topics and developing their confidence and self-esteem.

In order to access this service, parents/carers will need to consent to a referral, and to fill out a consent form. If you would like more information about this, or would like your child to be referred, please either contact school, or email: [Alice.Fairhurst@wyz.org.uk](mailto:Alice.Fairhurst@wyz.org.uk). For information about the Youth in Mind in-person service, please visit: [Youth in Mind](#).

We hope you have found this newsletter useful. For further safeguarding information, please visit the school website: <https://padgateacademy.co.uk/safeguarding>



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCAMS AND FAKE NEWS

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

"Fake news" refers to falsified or misleading material presented as a legitimate account of events. It's often used by malicious actors online to push an agenda, or even by criminals as a way of making scams more persuasive. Scammers can trick us into handing over personal information, security details and even our hard-earned cash.

### "CLICKBAIT" PHISHING SCAMS

A message arrives saying "Have you seen this video of yourself?" or you might be sent an attention-grabbing headline about a celebrity that's been shared on social media. This kind of "bait" is produced by scammers to drive us to click on an unsafe link, where malware could be downloaded to our devices. These scams rely on our curiosity and our "need-to-know" instinct.

### SALES, DEALS & DISCOUNTS

Some scams appear as adverts, offering a chance to buy something – such as designer products, expensive gadgets or tickets to a popular show – at a reduced price. Such plays often include a time limit or countdown, urging us to hurry so we don't miss out on the deal. This pressure encourages us to input personal details or payment information before pausing to check if it's legitimate.

### YOU'RE A WINNER!

This kind of scam involves fake giveaways, opportunities or freebies. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and suchlike. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting. All these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, thinking that there's something to be gained by doing so.

### FALSE FRIENDSHIPS

Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not to gain their victims' trust. They might attempt to convince any children they connect with that they're a child of similar age with shared interests. Warning signs include a high volume of messages (often with an intense tone), secrecy, inappropriate levels of intimacy, guilt tripping, emotional manipulation, threats or blackmail.

### PANIC MODE

To trigger a sense of panic, scammers may claim that a child's account has been hacked, or a virus has been installed on their device, or any number of other scary scenarios. They may claim to be able to fix the problem or offer a solution – if the child hands over control of the device or sensitive information. Similar scams involve impersonating a friend or relative, claiming that they're in trouble and need help.

### FAKE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Impersonating influential people online is a common tactic for scammers, who can use technology to create fake photos, audio and even videos that look authentic. These can be used to convince us, for example, to buy products, sign up for so-called "business opportunities" or invest in cryptocurrency schemes – all of which are fake or otherwise malicious. Many scams also involve the impersonation of popular companies' social media accounts, as well as those of individuals.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### STAY INFORMED

Stay up to date with the latest information and best practice on cyber-security. See what scam stories are reported in the news and make note of what tactics were used. Keep up with young people's digital lives: talk about what they're doing online and use properly endorsed resources to learn what risks certain sites and apps pose to their younger users.

### ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

Most scams rely on emotional or psychological manipulation, tapping into our human instincts – whether that's to keep ourselves safe, help others, find answers, make friends, avoid losing out or to secure something we really want. Encourage children to recognise that pressure to act and to always consult with an adult – especially if what's on offer sounds too good to be true.

### TALK TOGETHER

Chat often and openly with young people about fake news, online scams and how they both work. Encourage them to talk to you about anything they're unsure of or worried about online. If a child claims to have been scammed, don't pass judgement. Blaming the victim may deter young people from asking you for help. Remember: adults are scammed just as often, if not more.

### BE PROACTIVE

Children increasingly use digital devices for education, socialising, shopping and play. Don't wait for a problem to arise before you discuss the risk of scams, false information and fake news. Highlight what to look out for and clearly communicate under what circumstances the child ought to speak to an adult. Finally, ensure that they're aware of the support services that are available to them (such as Childline).

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading expert in digital safety, media law and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of risk online. She works with schools, businesses, and universities to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit [OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk](https://OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk) for more.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/fake-news-and-scams>



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# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MAKING FRIENDS ONLINE

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

In today's digital world, it's increasingly common for children to form friendships with people they've never met in person. While online connections can offer children a sense of belonging, they also carry significant risks. Around 19% of children aged 10 to 15 in England and Wales have chatted online with someone they've never met face to face. This guide offers expert advice for parents and educators on helping children navigate online friendships safely.

### ONLINE GROOMING THREATS

Predators can use games, chat apps or social media platforms to build relationships with children and gain their trust. This may quickly develop into grooming or exploitation. Between April 2017 and March 2023, UK police recorded nearly 34,000 online grooming offences – an 82% increase in just five years.

### EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Children may encounter distressing or explicit material while interacting with online contacts – especially via TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat. This is evidenced in a survey by the Children's Commissioner for England, which found that 45% of children aged 8 to 17 had seen content online that made them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset.

### PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS

Children and young people often overshare personal details – such as where they live or go to school – without understanding the consequences. In fact, 4.4% of 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK have met up in real life with someone they'd only spoken to online.

### COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY

Meeting an online 'friend' in real life risks placing a child in serious danger. From abduction to coercion, the consequences can be devastating. Reports of children being harmed after such meetings are becoming increasingly common in the UK, highlighting the need for safeguarding intervention.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Online harm – such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content – can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Sexortion' gangs, who threaten to release sexual information about a person unless they pay them money, have reportedly targeted children as young as 11, leaving them traumatised and ashamed.

### LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Children exposed to harmful online relationships early on may develop unhealthy beliefs about relationships, consent, or self-worth. In a recent case, a 26-year-old posed as a girl on Snapchat to befriend children aged 10 to 16, manipulating them into sexual activity and causing profound emotional distress. One 12-year-old tragically died by suicide, highlighting the long-term psychological harm online friendships with strangers can cause.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### TEACH SAFE ONLINE HABITS

Help children understand how to use privacy settings, protect their personal information, spot fake profiles, and report anything suspicious or concerning, like pressure tactics. Encourage them to think critically about what they share – and whom they're talking to.

### KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Let children know they can talk to you about their online life. Avoid reacting with anger or judgement, as this may prevent them from opening up in the future. A child who feels listened to is more likely to disclose problems before they escalate.

### ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS

Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.

### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, filter out inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

### Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with over 30 years' experience in supporting children, families, and adults across education, local authority, and mental health settings – both in the UK (including at Parliamentary level) and internationally.



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