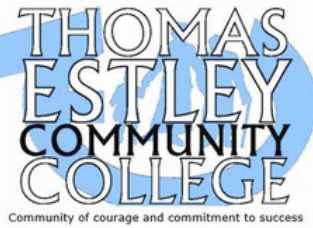


THOMAS ESTLEY'S SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Keeping you updated...



**HOT OFF
THE PRESS**



Smartphones, social media and adolescent mental health
Researchers at the University of Birmingham have published an interesting study 'Smartphones, Social Media and Adolescent mental well being: the impact of school policies (2023)' as part of their ongoing research called the 'SMART Schools study'.

Click on the image to view the report.

Extremism Definition Change

On 14 March 2024 the government announced a new definition of extremism that says:

“Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

- (1) negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- (2) undermine, overturn or replace the UK’s system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- (3) intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).”

This updated definition of extremism will be used by government departments and officials alongside a set of engagement principles, to ensure Government is not inadvertently providing a platform, funding or legitimacy to groups or individuals who attempt to advance extremist ideologies.

Currently, the scope of the definition and principles is UK ministerial central government departments only, so the Department for Education (DfE) are not asking any education settings to adopt the definition or apply the principles.

Instead, schools should continue to follow existing statutory guidance on safeguarding and the Prevent Duty and implement their policies in the same way.

The DfE will be reviewing existing guidance to account for the recent announcement in due course to consider changes

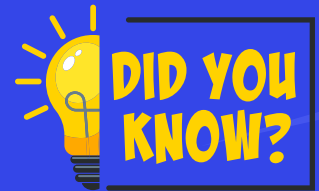


What You Should Know About...Sextortion

What is it?

Sextortion is a 'cyber-enabled crime' in which victims are lured into sharing intimate photos/videos or behaving in a sexual way in front of a camera.

Unbeknown to the victims, their actions have been recorded or saved by criminals who blackmail the victim by threatening to release the image or footage.



Nearly *two thirds* of gen-z teens, said they or their friends have been the targets of sextortion.



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF...



There are steps you can take to avoid becoming a victim -

- DON'T** share intimate photos or videos on an online platform.
- DON'T** agree to requests for nude photos/videos or perform intimate acts over a video call.
- DON'T** accept friend requests/messages from people you do not know offline.
- DON'T** include sensitive and/or personal information on your online profiles.
- DO** remember that anyone who truly cares for you will not pressure you to do something uncomfortable.
- DO** be mindful of who you accept as friends on social media.
- DO** strengthen your social media privacy settings.
- DO** question who it is you are really speaking to online.

childline
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Anyone can
become a
victim of
sextortion!

HELP AND ADVICE... ✨

If you or someone you know has become a victim of sextortion, you are not alone. It is important to stay calm and take the following actions..

- IGNORE** their demands and do not pay up.
- END** all communication on every channel/platform.
- CAPTURE** evidence of blackmail (including usernames).
- TALK** to a trusted friend or family member (even if it embarrassing).
- CONTACT** the police immediately - time is of the essence.
- BLOCK** the offender on all platforms and change the password.
- REPORT** the individual to the relevant website or app provider.
- CONSIDER** if you or the victim will need a suicide prevention plan.



Victims are usually targeted in online spaces - such as social media platforms or dating apps. The offender often uses fake ID to seem more appealing to potential victims. Once a victim has been targeted, offenders quickly befriend them before the blackmail begins.

During the friendship, they introduce the topic of sex & encourage the removal of clothing while on camera or to send nude photos.

The offender then reveals they have recorded the interaction and threatens to publicly expose the victim if they do not send a sum of money or more photos/videos.

REMEMBER!

**Sextortion is a serious crime!
YOU ARE NOT AT FAULT**

**It is so important to report it promptly to the police to
protect yourself and to stop the perpetrator!**

**It is illegal to create, possess or distribute
indecent images of children.
In situations where a child has taken and shared a
nude image of themselves, the law does not
unfairly punish that child and will handle their
case sensitively**

FACTS

CONCERNING NEW SOCIAL MEDIA 'CHALLENGE'

You might have heard about a recent, tragic incident involving an 11-year-old boy in Lancashire who lost his life after reportedly taking part in a dangerous trend called '**CHROMING**' during a sleepover.

Chroming involves inhaling various chemicals like aerosols, nitrous oxide, solvents, and nitrites, also known variously as nangs, nossies, whippets, and bullets. This activity is associated with a euphoric high, but carries potentially fatal risks, including heart and lung damage, as well as harm to brain and behavioural development.

While inhalant abuse is not a new phenomenon, what is particularly concerning is how this trend is spreading globally through social media. A 13-year-old girl in Australia died in 2023, suffering a heart attack after inhaling chemicals from a deodorant can during a sleepover.

Similarly, a 14-year-old from Ireland who died after inhaling aerosol is suspected to have been influenced by seeing the challenge on TikTok.

The UK government updated the law on November 8th, 2023, to classify nitrous oxide as a Class C drug, subjecting those who misuse or possess with the intent to misuse it to criminal penalties. However, many solvents abused in chroming, like glue, permanent markers, and deodorant cans, are widely accessible everyday items, so inherently harder to police.

There are various methods of inhalation that are used when chroming, therefore it can be difficult to control the dosage. This danger increases significantly in enclosed spaces or when covering the face with items such as plastic bags.

Spraying – Spraying the contents of an aerosol container directly into the mouth or nose.

Bagging – Spraying the contents of an aerosol container into a paper or plastic bag to be held over the person's mouth or nose for inhalation.

Sniffing – Sniffing the fumes directly from the container.

Huffing – Soaking a rag with the inhalant and holding it to the face for inhalation.



**Inhalant abuse is extremely dangerous.
It can lead to accidents, long-term health
problems and even death**

Scan the QR code for a helpful resource



THOMAS ESTLEY'S SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

REPORTING HARMFUL CONTENT

Recent research has shown that children and young people are very unlikely to take action, such as reporting or flagging to the platform when they see harmful content and behaviours online. So why is that?

Why?

WHAT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ARE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SEEING ONLINE?

Unfortunately, they are likely to be target of some types of inappropriate content and abusive behaviours that adults won't be.

This includes grooming attempts, trolling and cyberbullying from their classmates or peer group.

REPORT

ENCOURAGING TO REPORT ONLINE ABUSE & INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Talking to a young person about how to stay safe online may reduce the chances of them viewing inappropriate content or being susceptible to grooming etc. Build a relationship to for them to feel secure and confident to confide in you.

Encourage conversations.

Reassure them that reporting content will not get them into trouble.

Stay calm if they talk to you about something that they have seen online.

LEARN TOGETHER - Sit down and learn together how to report, flag and block on each platform.

BE AN EXAMPLE - One of the best things we can do to help staying safer online is to lead by example, just like the offline world. They look to the trusted adults for guidance on how to react and interact in this world.

Nearly 1/3 of children say they sometimes do nothing when they are upset about something online

1/3 of 12-17 yr olds said that they knew how to use a reporting or flagging function, but only 14% said they had used any of them.

WHY THEY DON'T REPORT ONLINE ABUSE & HARMFUL CONTENT?

SHAME & EMBARRASSMENT - Becoming a target can become an embarrassment to a young person, they may feel that they have done something wrong.

GETTING INTO TROUBLE - They could be concerned about their parents reactions. May misunderstand the legalities around harmful illegal content they have viewed.

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO - May not be equipped of the procedure in reporting/flagging content.

BUILT-UP TOLERANCE & ACCEPTANCE - Unfortunately, they may just be 'used to it' when it comes to inappropriate content. The prevalence at which they encounter this type of material might mean that it's accepted as part of the normal experience of being online and just 'background noise' they block out.

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT 'FINSTAS'

While we are seeing social media platforms introduce features that focus on curating content for your 'close friend' groups, another trend is seeing a resurgence in popularity with young people in the UK.

A 'finsta' (a slang term that combines 'fake' & 'Insta', a popular shortened title for Instagram) may be the new choice of account for younger generations.

WHAT IS FINSTA?

Surely a finsta is a fake Instagram account? Not exactly... A finsta is not the same thing as a fake account (which often engages in scam-like behaviour). Instead, a finsta refers to a secondary account where a user's identity and profile are typically hidden, with access only available to a chosen group of friends or followers.



ACCORDING TO THE 20/21 #OFCOM REPORT, TWO-THIRDS OF 8-11YEAR OLDS IN THE UK HAD MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS OR PROFILES, WITH ALMOST HALF OF THEM RUNNING AN ACCOUNT JUST FOR THEIR FAMILY TO SEE.T

WHY WOULD A YOUNG PERSON CREATE A FINSTA?

AUTHENTICITY

ALLOWS THEM TO BE 'REAL' WITH THEIR CLOSE FRIENDS

CONNECTION

WITH SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT THEY WANT TO SEE

ANONYMITY

MEANS NOT WORRYING ABOUT THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE

FREEDOM

TO POST WITHOUT ANXIETY OVER RECEPTION OR 'LIKE COUNT'

PRIVACY

TO EXPLORE 'NICHE' INTERESTS SEPARATELY FROM 'REAL' ACCOUNT



RISKS OF FINSTA

Unexpected behaviour
Anonymity may encourage unlikely behaviour EG -explicit content etc

Missed help
Worrisome posts hidden from public view may not be addressed by the appropriate help or self-harm or destructive behaviour

Unwanted exposure
Others may take screenshots & send to others

Harmful opinions
Extremist behaviour or insensitive language

Social interaction
May be approached by other users with malicious intentions

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Nothing is truly private

Go through the process of protecting the images they post

Protect personal information

Have an open, non-judgemental conversation about finstas

Support their decision to have a private account but check in with them

