# Online Safety Bulletin

## Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board's Online Safety Bulletin. We hope you find this information useful, not only on how to keep children safe from Abuse and Harm online, but also yourself as professionals and parents or carers. Within this edition there is information on

1. Safety features on new technology gifts
2. Tips to stop over-sharing online
3. Focus on Snapchat
4. Where to go for help

## Safety features on new technology gifts

As Christmas approaches there are plenty of new gadgets that parents and carers may be thinking about buying for their children. But before you wrap up your presents, have you checked out the safety features?

### Smartphones, tablets and games consoles

The Safer Internet Centre's **parents' guide to technology** gives useful and practical advice when buying a new smartphone, games console, tablet, connected TV or other internet-connected device. This guide looks at some of the most frequently asked questions about devices as well as looking at the safety features that are available on these devices.

One idea is to have a look at the device before you hand it over to your child on Christmas day and take the time to install the parental controls that you want onto the device. This way you know how the device works and don't have to worry about finding time to install parental controls once your child already has access to the device.

### Setting up parental controls on your home internet

It's also important to look at what parental controls you have set up on your home internet, as this will help reduce the chances of children stumbling across something inappropriate while browsing the web. Your internet provider will offer free parental controls that you may find useful. You can read the full guide to **parental controls offered by home internet providers here.**

### Internet Connected toys

Internet connected toys may also be on top of your child's wishlist and they can offer fun and interactivity, but also can present new risks and challenges. It's important therefore that you ask questions about the toy in the shop before you make a purchase.

One of the questions you may want to think about before you buy your child an Internet Connected Toy is what information the toy collects. Does it require location services to work or will you be able to turn this feature off? Will the toy take pictures of your child? And it's also important to know where the information the toy collects will be stored. It's always worth asking about what privacy controls and safety settings you can use to make the device work for your family.

Whatever presents you're buying for your children this Christmas, one of the most important things you can do is have an open conversation with your child about technology and the internet. By maintaining an open dialogue with your child and encouraging them to talk to you about their internet use you can help your children access the amazing resources the internet has to offer whilst keeping them safe online. These **conversation starters** from Childnet.com are a great ways to talk about the internet with your children.

Source: http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/tech-gifts-christmas

# '12 Shares of Christmas': Tips to stop over-sharing online

Social media has many benefits, but the instant nature of posting and sharing means it's incredibly easy to give too much information away, be it personal information, opinions or private photographs.

Sharing can have negative consequences, including providing personal details to undesirable people and **damaging your online reputation.**

**Internet Matters,** a not for profit e-safety group has created 12 tips for parents to help stop children oversharing and use the internet safely.

### 1. Are they sharing inappropriate selfies?

Discuss the reasons why they feel the need to share such images and the potential long-term impact this could have on them if the pictures are used without their consent.

Peer pressure and the desire for attention can be reasons why some children feel the need to share inappropriate photos with their online friends.

### 2. Do you feel they're spending too much time on social media?

Talk together so they understand your concerns. Agree house rules on when and how long they can go online and which sites they should visit.

### 3. Are they sharing their location through apps?

Make sure geolocation is disabled to keep their whereabouts private. Explain why it's important that they never share personal information with people they don't know online.

### 4. Have they posted too much personal information?

Talk to them about who they've shared the information with and assess the risk it poses to your child. You can also ask your child to remove the information from their account and help them understand how to share safely.

### 5. Are they chatting to strangers online?

Make sure your child understands that people may hide behind fake profiles for dishonest reasons and the person they've been chatting to could easily be someone with bad intentions.

### 6. Are they gaming with strangers online?

Playing games online can be fun and positive but make sure your child understands people may hide behind fake profiles for dishonest reasons and learn how to block and report anything offensive.

### 7. Do they have hundreds of followers?

Explain that some people may not be who they say they are and tell your child how privacy settings can put them in control of who they talk to.

### 8. Have they shared embarrassing images?

Remind your child that these images are their personal digital footprint for years to come and advise them to use settings that only let them share with friends they know. If they're not comfortable wearing it on their T-shirt, they shouldn't put it online.

### 9. Are they at risk of being cyberbullied?

Stay calm, listen without judging and reassure your child that you can help. Discuss any action you may take together. Encourage them not to retaliate and to save any evidence.

### 10. Do they understand that what they share online can hurt others?

Talk together about peer pressure and how screens and anonymity can lead to behaviour that is hurtful. Remind them there's a fine line between sharing content because it's funny or might get lots of 'likes' versus the potential to cause offence or hurt.

### 11. Have they been affected by content shared online?

Encourage them to think about why friends may share certain posts. Show them how to gently challenge their friends if they find their content offensive. Remind them they can always talk to you about things happening online.

### 12. Are they ready to share on social media?

Most social media apps have a minimum age rating of 13. If a social network has set an age limit it means that some of the content may not be suitable for a younger child.

*For a comprehensive and easy-to-use resource of the most up-to-date information for keeping your child safe online, check out **Internet Matters.***

Source http://home.bt.com/tech-gadgets/internet/internet-matters-tips-stop-oversharing-online-11364120356978

Source https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/social-media/

# Online grooming:

**Grooming** is about building a relationship with a child in order to later abuse them. This can be far easier online.

- Games, social media and chatrooms enable people to make contact with children to try to groom them.
- They can create multiple online identities and even pretend to be children and young people to trick real children into chatting and sharing.
- They can find out a lot about individual children before they make contact by looking at the things the child has posted.
- Using this information they can target children who are particularly vulnerable and carefully plan what they will say and show an interest in.
- They can also contact lots of children very quickly in the hope that one will respond

People who want to groom children will use any sites and services which are popular with young people. They can become very active in online games or communities popular with children.

On social media they might send out multiple 'friend requests' at random in the hope that young people will accept them. They also try to identify young people who might be particularly vulnerable by looking at the things they post.

In games and chatrooms they will try to start conversations with young people and then ask them to chat privately, perhaps on social media or on a mobile chat app.

You should assume that if a site or app is popular with young people then people with a sexual interest in children will try to use it to communicate with them. This doesn't mean you should panic or not let your children use them, simply that they should be aware that there can be risks on any platform they are using.

### How can I tell if my child is being groomed online?

There isn't one clear sign of online grooming and it can be very hard to spot. If your child is being groomed they will probably be trying to keep it a secret from you.

- **Have they suddenly become very secretive?**

  People who abuse will try to stop young people telling their friends and family about the abusive relationship.

Source: https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Online-grooming/

- **Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?**

  If something is going on with your child online it might be really upsetting them. They might feel trapped, like they can't talk about it. Let them know you're there to listen.

- **Do they seem distracted?**

  We can all get caught up in ourselves if things are worrying us. If they seem unusually preoccupied it might be because things are weighing on them which they feel they can't talk about.

- **Do they have sudden mood swings?**

  Mood swings are not uncommon in adolescence but they can be a sign that someone has built a relationship with your child which is affecting their moods.

- **Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?**

  Lots of us find it hard not to check our phone or the internet, but if your child gets particularly worried or stressed when they can't, this can be a sign someone is controlling them.

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**Concerned about someone your child is in contact with?**

If you're concerned that your child might be being groomed you should seek support. You can contact your local police, children's social care department or report directly to CEOP.

If you want to discuss your concerns with someone call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

If you believe your child is at immediate risk call 999.

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### What should I tell my child?

It's important to ensure that your children are aware of the risks posed by people with a sexual interest in children online. They should know that they should be wary of people they talk to online, not share too much personal information and be aware of how they appear in their online profiles. It's also important that your child knows they can talk to you if anything is bothering them and that you will be supportive.

Thinkuknow provides films and cartoons for you to watch and discuss with your children. These explore online grooming and other issues explaining the risks and safe behaviours in an age - appropriate way. You can watch them all on **Thinkuknow** or **YouTube**

# Focus on Snapchat

Snapchat is a messaging app that is popular with teenagers which allows them to share user-generated photos, texts and videos, i.e. 'snaps'. Once a 'snap' is sent to someone else it appears on screen for a matter of seconds before disappearing, however, there are a number of Third-party apps and some users have also been known to take a screenshot of any Snapchat and save it to their phone which could be used later for grooming or blackmail purposes. There's also a feature on Snapchat called 'Snapstory' where you can put your 'snaps' on your 'story' for more than one person to see for 24 hours.

There is safety information **Snapchat's safety centre**.

Snapchat also has **guidance for parents**. It explains why young people might like Snapchat, how it works and how to use the safety tools available.

Source: http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-help/snapchat

# What help can I get for my child?

If your child needs someone to talk to because of anything which has upset them, it could be that they are being bullied or that they have seen something online which they wish they hadn't, there are a number of places they can go.

Children can ring Childline on 0800 1111 and speak to trained counsellors about any problems they may face. Childline is run by the NSPCC and is there to help your child.

The **Childline website** also offers excellent help and advice on a whole range of issues.

## Seen something illegal online?

If you have come across something you think might be illegal online, such as sexual images of children and young people, then you can report this to the **Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)**. It's their job to make sure that things like this are taken off the internet.

## Local services

Your child's school will offer a range of support and can help put you in touch with services in your area.

## Are you worried about your own sexual thoughts and behaviour?

Some people struggle with sexual thoughts and behaviours towards children. Are you someone who wants to stop these thoughts and behaviours but does not know how? **Stop it Now! UK and Ireland** offer confidential help and support. You can call them on 0808 1000 900 or email at **help@stopitnow.org.uk**,

The next online safety Bulletin will be published in July, if there is anything you would like to see please email **jody.watts@peterborough.gov.uk**