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Safeguarding and Child Protection at Mossy Lea and St George's Primary

May Newsletter

Social Media

Last week, the staff at both schools had training on Social Media delivered by Rubbi, who regularly works with Year 5 and 6 at St. George's. The training was really interesting and helped staff learn about a number of new social media platforms and features. We also discussed the importance of regular discussion with children about social media. Social media doesn't have to be scary as long as we are prepared. On the back of this month's newsletter, are some tips on how to talk to your children about social media. The advice is taken from a document called The Things I Wish My Parents Had Known. Although the guide may be aimed at children slightly older than some at Mossy Lea our recent training highlighted the importance of starting these conversations with children as early as possible.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a partnership between police and schools. Mossy Lea is part of Operation Encompass in partnership with Lancashire Police. One of the principles of Operation Encompass is that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools, not just those where an offence can be identified. Operation Encompass is very simple and easy to implement within a school. Every school appoints a trained Key Adult – the Key Adult is the person who receives information about police attended Domestic Abuse incidents. The Key Adult will be notified prior to the start of the next school day that the police have attended an incident of domestic abuse. This timely information sharing enables appropriate support to be provided for that child so that all interactions, from when the child first arrives at the school gates, are of a positive nature. The Key Adult must be trained as a Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Key Adults at Mossy Lea are Antonella Greenhalgh and Andy Purcell.

Worried about a Child?

If you're worried about a child or young person, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline for support and advice for free - call us on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or [contact us online](#).

Children can contact [Childline](#) on 0800 111 or online any time to get support themselves.

What children find hard about having these conversations and how to make it easier

It's awkward / embarrassing

1 Start conversations early, before your child gets a phone or social media account. Keep the conversation going over time, adapting to your child. Don't let awkwardness or 'taboo' subjects build. The [Thinkuknow](#) website has age-appropriate conversation-starters.

2 Keep it casual, find everyday opportunities to speak about relationships and the online world – like when you're walking or driving somewhere. Young people told us that they didn't want 'the big talk'!

3 Use your own experiences, be vulnerable. Share your own memories and experiences of being a child/teen. You could talk about something that happened when you were young, and how different it might have been if it had ended up online.

4 If you don't know how to start, try watching an [AsktheAwkward](#) video together – use this to **open up a conversation and ask them questions**.

5 It's okay to laugh! Our young people told us that laughing with their parent can break tension and makes everyone feel more comfortable – they don't want you to be too serious or scary.

Parents don't know enough

1 Young people want their parents to **learn about new technology and trends**, including risky behaviours and dangerous spaces online. We share links to brilliant resources and expert organisations at the end of this guide.

2 If you're not sure, **ask your child**. *Allow them to be the expert*. Our young people told us this is a really simple way to build mutual trust.

3 If you're still not sure, **ask a teacher or trusted professional**. They will be able to point you in the right direction for extra advice and support.

4 Be involved in your child's decision-making early on. Young people told us that parents who took an active interest early on were far better equipped to step in when things went wrong.

Fear of consequences

1 Create a safe and trusting home environment. Young people told us the home environment is key, they want to share things with their parents but don't always feel able. Help your child to feel comfortable talking about apps they're on and what they're experiencing online.

2 Before punishing them and taking away their phone, try to be **non-judgmental and help them** out of bad situations. Young people want parents to know that if they think they will not be allowed to go online *they won't tell you what is happening*.

3 Be ready to step in and help if something goes wrong. This guide provides advice on these issues, so you can know where to go if a nude image of them is shared without consent, or if you find out they're being bullied, or sexually abused or groomed.

4 Be honest and explain. If you take their phone or limit social media access give reasons. It is understood that in some situations this is reasonable, but needs to be explained properly. If not, trust can be damaged and children might not open up a second time.

5 Establish ground-rules and agree these with your child. Be prepared for rules to change over time. Reassure your child that you trust them, especially as they get older.