

## Safeguarding and Child Protection



#### March 2023 Newsletter

#### Protecting children in a club, sport or other activity



It's important to look for a club, sport or activity that takes the safety and wellbeing of your child seriously. Always check whether the club or organisation is accredited or otherwise affiliated to a body (e.g. a sports governing body or national voluntary sector or <u>faith organisation</u>) as this should mean they have the right safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

Even if they're accredited, there are some key things to look for to ensure they take children's safety seriously:

- •A <u>welfare or child protection officer</u> you can contact about safeguarding or with any concerns.
- •Clear procedures and processes for raising complaints and concerns.
- •Written standards of good practice like a <u>code of conduct or code of behaviour</u>. This should outline the boundaries that staff and volunteers should respect when working with children and young people and should address things like discrimination and bullying and social media behaviour.
- •Effective **consent and emergency processes**. You should receive a form asking for your consent to the activity, for your contact details, and any relevant medical information about your child from the club or organisation.
- •A **safe recruitment process** for staff and volunteers, including **vetting**. This means they have appropriate references, criminal records checks and the right technical qualifications for the activity.
- •Staff and volunteers are **trained in safeguarding** (child protection). NSPCC Learning provides <u>information and online courses</u> if you work with children.
- •Children and young people are suitably supervised (based on their age, ability, the activity and venue) by adults who are trained to care for them.
- •The activity takes place in a **safe environment** and there are separate changing areas for children and adults.

#### 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 <u>0808 800 5000</u> or <u>contact us online</u>.

Children can contact Childline on 0800 111 or online any time to get support themselves.

# Helping children and young people with MANAGING DEVICE STRESS AND ANXIETY

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? The internet and advances in the capability of digital devices have afforded us arguably the fastest period of technological and social evolution in living memory: creating apportunities for us to interact with people anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It's also, however, blurred safety boundaries and added new stresses for young people, who are often less aware of the hidden hazards. With almost half of 10–15-year-olds experiencing bullying online and algorithms pushing content in front of our children every day, it's important to know how to address some of these challenges.

#### LIVING ONLINE

The internet is awash with sophisticosted algorithms that learn from our online behaviour and try to predict our wants and needs. That's very height in some respects, but it can make the online world difficult for children and young people to negotiate. Content can be beought to them at any time – it may not always be appropriate, and children may not always be appropriate, and children may not always be appropriate, and children may not with it.

#### PUSHY NOTIFICATIONS

Content is also directed at us through notifications from our appet letting us know we have a new message or social post to read, for example. While that's useful in some circumstenaces, it conditions us to keep going back online (and is designed to do so) and can be a read-constant demand on your child's attention. As such alerts become more common, are we experiencing on "ottack of the pings"?

#### BLURRED BOUNDARIES

There are now so many ways we can opermunicate arisins in neal time (Size instant messaging apps) or with a delay (such as on social media) that it's possible to be constantly in conveniation. Young people often prefer quickfire exchanges of text – but using lewer words can couse distressing miscommunications through the lack of non-verbal oues like fecial expressions or bane of voice.

#### DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

As devices allow occess to immediate external heigh in challenging situations, it's a concern that children many not be developing the inner confidence to work things out for themselves. Literalise, group membership is hugely important to young people—both in digital and real life — and being excluded from online conversations can cause damaging technics of immediate and invitations.

#### DISGUISED DISTRESS

children often hoven't yet developed the emotional resources to deal with many of the setbocks of overlyday fits, as identifying when it's pecifically something online their's vorried them can be tricky. A certain ever of atmess is a normal response o a problem: it spurs us into action a kep ourselves earls. If the stress a emotishing and potentially lead exercises to decreasion.

#### ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIALS

Social media can bring people together in hugely positive ways. Sody, it does also have a dorker side, including flame war arguments which can escalate quickly and have hurtful consequences. With so many people looking an, group shaming situations are also common - white there are continual opportunities for young people to compare themselves regatively with other social media users.

### Advice for Parents & Carers

#### LEARN THE BASICS

It's impossible to keep up with every briline change or every new opp. The best option is to make yourself ewere of the fundamentals of how the internet operates, so you can help your child to group how - and why - content reaches them. Devices and the digital world can be confusing, so learning to understand them better will give you the confidence to talk to your child about them.

#### TALK IT OUT

If a child mentions a comment that's been directed at them in a test chot are an social mediu. It may sound misor but can socially have a much bigger effect than we realise, in our evolved brains, any perceived threat can get internalised while our body reacts as If we were in physical danger – raising stress levels. It's always worth encouraging your child to set any concerns out in the open.

#### **PUSH DISTRACTIONS AWAY**

Notifications to our phones and tablets can be helpful, but they sometimes make one wonder what year the present or the device? Checking our phone as soon as it goes off is an easy habit to fall into – especially for young people. Try switching off non-essendal alerts on your devices and encourage your child to do the same; you should both fire! less triposered and more in control.

#### LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

This is tricky - and may depend on the child's age - but any sudden change in behaviour is worth cooking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, deesn't want to be partie from them, or appears unusually secretive, analous or withdrawn, it could be a sign that samething is amiss in relation to their device - and, possibly, that there's in reset of other support.

#### KEEP CHECKING IN

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Healthy emotional regulation bearaces three systems, threat, drive and grounding. Down the various rabbit hakes of the interriet, however, that balance can easily allo average as it's important to help your child manage their emotions when they're online, Check in with their regularly when they're on their device, and remember that 'distraction' and 'releasation' aren't always the same thing.

#### BE KIND: UNWIND

the kind to yourselves as parents and carers, termember that we're off in the same boot, trying to safety guide our children through this complex, last moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having natural, relaxed conversations with your child about their arise life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it for easier

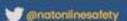
#### Meet Our Expert

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