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Welcome to the 2nd Safeguarding Newsletter of this academic year. This term, the students will start to learn about online safety and will continue with this topic throughout the year.
The focus of this newsletter will therefore offer some advice and guidance for parents and carers on helping to keep your child safe online.

It is important that we help young people take control of what they share online and encourage them to build a positive online reputation that will support their future education or career aspirations. Tips for parents and carers include:

Private can mean public - Teach young people that it's difficult to keep things private online. They should never post anything online they don't want thousands of people, including their family, to see.

Maintain positive online behaviour and social media profiles yourself – set an example in the way you behave online

Teach young people to think before they share – help them to understand that their actions could affect themselves and others

Encourage young people to use their online presence to build a positive reputation for themselves

Deactivate and delete unused or incorrect profiles – when young people stop using a social networking profile or website, it's a good idea that they deactivate or delete their account. This will mean that the account is no longer live and shouldn't be searchable online.

Suzanne Fletcher
Designated Safeguarding Lead

Darren Fletcher
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Daniel Bowman
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Social media

Social networking sites are a huge favourite with young people because they allow them to stay in touch with friends, meet new people with similar interests and share photos and videos. Used appropriately, social networks are an excellent place for young people to demonstrate their creativity and, in certain respects, avoid isolation as they enjoy a sense of belonging.

What are the risks that young people may need to deal with on social media?

Unless used appropriately, young people are at real risk of exposure to the following:

• Violent, sexual and pornographic content
• Inaccurate or false information, and extreme views
• Harmful behaviours, including self-harm, anorexia and suicide
• Oversharing of personal information
• Bullying, intimidating or frightening behaviour, including actively or unintentionally getting involved in this conduct
• Fake profiles that people use for mischief-making, sexual grooming, stalking, blackmail, extortion, identity theft or hacking.

Useful websites for further information:
www.childnet.com/sns
www.internetmatters.org
www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
www.parentzone.org.uk
www.thinkyouknow.co.uk/parents
www.askaboutgames.com

What can parents/carers do to help keep young people safe on social networks?

Educate yourself on what the various social networks and apps do
Help them to set privacy, location and tagging settings
Show them how to report people and inappropriate conversations using the 'help' or 'report' tab
Teach young people how to block or ignore people
Teach young people not to share any personal details
Visit the social media sites and familiarise yourself with each site's online safety guidelines; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat all have safety and reporting facilities
Explain that friends should be people they know and meeting people they know only online can be dangerous
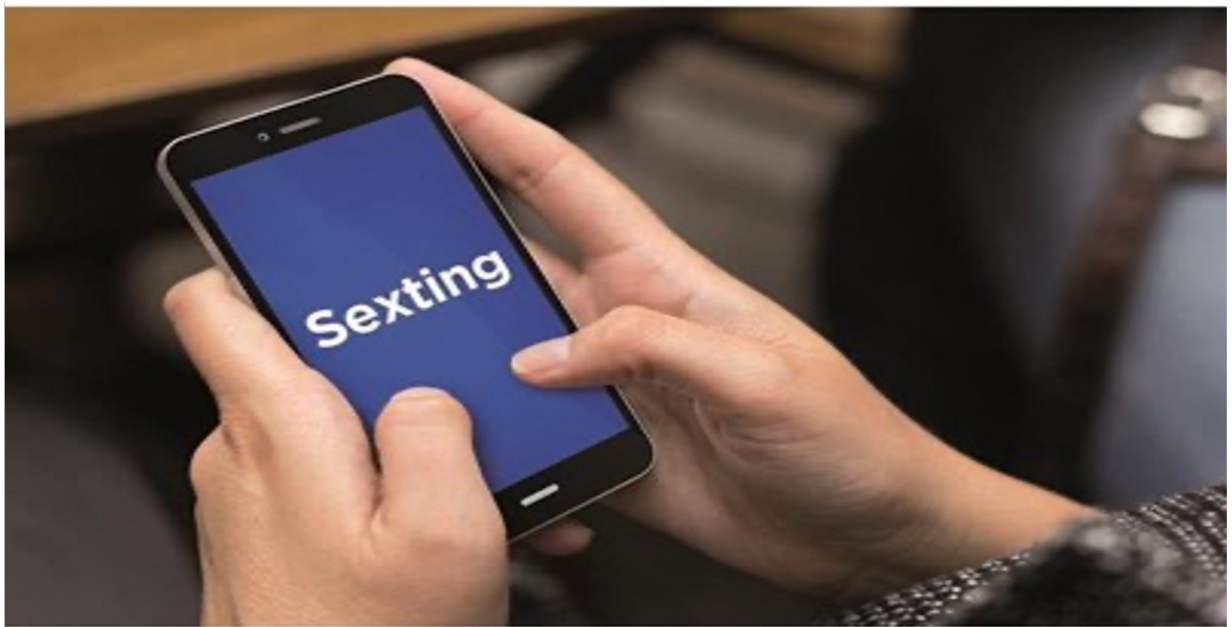
What is Sexting?

• Taking and sharing inappropriate or explicit pictures or videos is often referred to as sexting, 'nudes' or Youth Produced Sexual Imagery. It's an activity that young people (and adults) are increasingly engaging in. Young people are used to sharing and documenting their lives online. It is very easy to hit the 'send' button before pausing to think about the consequences.

Steps to take if your child has shared an inappropriate or explicit film or image of themselves:

1. **Offer reassurance and try not to panic –** explore the facts gently / keep the evidence as it may be needed later
2. **Ask them who they have shared it with** – judge if it is appropriate to contact the person who they have shared the image with
3. **Inform the provider/website** – most images are shared via mobiles but they can be shared via social networking sites.
4. **Inform the authorities –** judge if it appropriate to contact the Police, particularly if you think your child has been coerced into the sharing the image**.** If the young person is under 18 and the image has been shared with an adult then inform CEOP. (www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)
5. **Inform college**

Help and support for parents

• If you are concerned and need help to deal with the issue with your child, here is a list of organisations that can support you.:
• Internet Watch Foundation - provide support to removes explicit images or videos of children
• Police Helpline – 101 for non-emergency support
• Parent Protect Helpline – 0808 1000 900

Sexting

Online Dating

More and more young people are taking to social media and online apps to form romantic relationships. If they have few opportunities to socialise with others their age because of disabilities, learning difficulties or responsibilities at home, they tend to look online for love and admiration more than other young people do. The drive to belong and be loved is so powerful that safety rules are forgotten.

How can parents or carers help?

Here are some tips to help young people to make safer choices about who they interact with romantically online:

- Discuss potential risks such as online grooming and what signs to look out for.
- Empower young people to say no when they feel uncomfortable
- Ensure the correct privacy settings are being used
- Talk about healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Talk about what is ok and what isn't ok
- Explain that some people online are not who they say they are
- If a problem occurs, support the young person – do not shame or blame them.