

Safeguarding at More House

Safety Online Parental Bulletin - November 2020

Dear Parents,

The online world develops and changes at great speed. New opportunities, challenges and risks are appearing all the time. The latest Cybersurvey has been published by Internet Matters. This is the largest and most robust survey of its kind in the UK, with nearly 15,000 children aged 11-17 taking part in 82 schools across the country. In the latest report, authors, Adrienne Katz (Youthworks) and Aiman El Asam (Kingston University) have identified key themes from what young people say about their online lives. The study ran before COVID-19 began.

Among the themes that are highlighted in the report, is the finding that the numbers of children viewing harmful content online dramatically increased over a period of four years, between 2015 and 2019, with particular concern relating to body image, both for boys wanting to 'bulk up' and girls wanting picture-perfect bodies, or even worse anorexic or harmed bodies.

Key themes include:

- Content risk is more commonly experienced than contact risk
- Parents could talk more to their children about online life in general, rather than only when giving advice
- The gap widens between vulnerable and non-vulnerable teens
- Cyberbullying remains stable at 22% of the total sample (this year the survey asked about severity and frequency)
- Meetups are commonplace, 18% have done so and many are benign
- Sexting, desire, coercion and relationship norms
- Online aggression is racist, homophobic, often gendered, and hate speech is common
- Spending quite a bit of money in games
- Too few of our teenagers are actively following the online safety advice they were taught
- The positive aspects of online life are enjoyed by all young people but appear much more important to already vulnerable teens than to their peers
- The influence of vloggers with a particular age group

The report can be found here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/about-us/in-their-own-words-2019-cybersurvey-research-report/>

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Here are some tips for Parents:

- **Have a conversation**

It is really important to chat with your children on an ongoing basis about staying safe online. Not sure where to begin? These conversation starter suggestions can help.

1. Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.
2. Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?
3. Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.
4. Encourage them to help someone! Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.
5. Think about how you each use the internet. What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities that you could enjoy as a family?

- **Safety tools on social networks and other online services**

Most online services offer some safety features that can help you manage access to age-inappropriate content, report concerns or protect privacy.

It is a good idea to think about the sites and services your family uses, and check out which features these sites have that might be helpful for you. Talk to your children and make sure they know how to use the tools on the sites and services they use.

- **Social media guides**

Find out more about the safety features available on these popular social networks.

YouTube

SnapChat

TikTok

Instagram

Twitter

Facebook

Moshi Monster

WhatsApp

Imessage

Pinterest

House Party

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- **Parental controls offered by your home internet provider**

You can set up filters on your home internet to help prevent age inappropriate content being accessed on devices in your home.

The 4 big internet providers in the UK – BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media - provide their customers with free parental controls which can be activated at any time. They have come together to produce these helpful video guides to help you to download and set-up the controls offered by your provider.

Please also be aware of Teen websites that may or may not contain appropriate content such as OMEGLE.

