



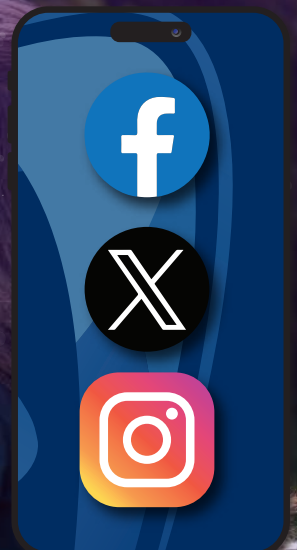
The Abbey School

"BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE"

Safeguarding Newsletter 2024/25

Date: 20/12/24

THE HOWARD
Academy Trust



December Safeguarding Spotlight on Online Safety at Christmas

New phone, tablet or gaming device for Christmas?
Did you know; research by internet matters shows 2 in 5 parents are more relaxed about children's online safety over Christmas



Summary

- Eight in ten of those parents who are more relaxed about their children's online activity want to be less strict simply because 'it's Christmas'.
- Of the same group, three quarters say their children will be allowed to spend more time online over Christmas and over a quarter will be on social media more often

Christmas is a time for merriment and enjoyment with many letting their hair down a little during the festive season. In addition to six in ten parents (58%) caring less about what they eat, and two fifths (43%) being more relaxed about drinking alcohol over Christmas, new research from Internet Matters – the leading online safety not-for-profit – found that many parents will also relax the rules for their children too, with two in five (42%) being less strict when it comes to their children's online activity.

How and why are parents more lenient?

The main reason two in five parents are more relaxed stems from parents wanting to simply enjoy the Christmas festivities, with eight in ten (78%) saying they're more lenient simply because 'it's Christmas'. On the other hand, a third (27%) say they just need to keep their kids occupied and a fifth (18%) say they are kept so busy with other things at this time of year.

With parents often run ragged in the run up to Christmas, this could open up children to potential online risk, as nearly a fifth of parents (17%) who do relax online rules over Christmas say they will allow their children to use devices where safety controls may not be in place.

At the same time, 74% allow their children to spend more time online, and at later hours (37%) too.

What's more, over a quarter (27%) of these parents will give children permission to use social media more frequently, which, coupled with the fact one in ten (13%) will allow their kids to use apps and platforms they wouldn't usually be allowed to, means it's important to set up parental controls and privacy settings this Christmas.

What can parents do?

To help parents at what is an incredibly busy time of the year, Internet Matters has a handy solution in My Family's Digital Toolkit – offering personalised online safety advice, to give parents everything they need to keep their child safe. In addition to providing advice for a range of common online safety concerns, the toolkit lets parents customise their answers depending on their child's age, and the apps and devices they use.

The Toolkit covers all aspects of a child's online life including gaming, social media, watching videos and even ways to develop new skills.

By simply answering eight questions, parents can get ahead of the festive season and put measures in place to keep their children safe when they may have less time to think about it.

The Government has welcomed Internet Matters' initiative for parents to set up online safety measures ahead of Christmas, so that children and families have safe and enjoyable experiences online over the festive period.

Earlier this year, Instagram introduced a new feature designed specifically for teenagers: the Teen Account. This new account type aims to create a safer, more controlled environment for teens on Instagram, offering parents greater peace of mind about their children's safety while using the platform.



Teen Accounts provide an added layer of protection to help safeguard children online, but they are not a guarantee against all online risks. They work best when combined with the active involvement and monitoring of parents. Think of them as a helpful tool to support, not replace, your role in keeping your child safe online.

Built-in protections to address parents' top concerns

We developed Teen Accounts with parents and teens in mind. The new Teen Account protections are designed to address parents' biggest concerns, including who their teens are talking to online, the content they're seeing and whether their time is being well spent. These protections are turned on automatically, and parents decide if teens under 16 can change any of these settings to be less strict:

- **Private accounts:** With default private accounts, teens need to accept new followers and people who don't follow them can't see their content or interact with them. This applies to all teens under 16 (including those already on Instagram and those signing up) and teens under 18 when they sign up for the app.
- **Messaging restrictions:** Teens will be placed in the strictest messaging settings, so they can only be messaged by people they follow or are already connected to.
- **Sensitive content restrictions:** Teens will automatically be placed into the most restrictive setting of our **sensitive content control**, which limits the type of sensitive content (such as content that shows people fighting or promotes cosmetic procedures) teens see in places like Explore and Reels.
- **Limited interactions:** Teens can only be tagged or mentioned by people they follow. We'll also automatically turn on the most restrictive version of our anti-bullying feature, **Hidden Words**, so that offensive words and phrases will be filtered out of teens' comments and DM requests.
- **Time limit reminders:** Teens will get notifications telling them to leave the app after 60 minutes each day.
- **Sleep mode enabled:** Sleep mode will be turned on between 10 PM and 7 AM, which will mute notifications overnight and send auto-replies to DMs.

More ways for parents to get involved, if they want

While Teen Accounts put new protections in place automatically, many parents want to be even more involved in their teen's experiences, so we're also adding to our **supervision feature**. Updates include ways to:

- **Get insights into who their teens are chatting with:** While parents can't read their teen's messages, now they will be able to see who their teen has messaged in the past seven days.
- **Set total daily time limits for teens' Instagram usage:** Parents can decide how much time their teen can spend on Instagram each day. Once a teen hits that limit, they'll no longer be able to access the app.
- **Block teens from using Instagram for specific time periods:** Parents can choose to block their teens from using Instagram at night, or specific time periods, with one easy button.
- **See topics your teen is looking at:** Parents can view the age-appropriate topics their teen has chosen to see content from, based on their interests.

HOW AS A PARENT CAN I KEEP TEENAGERS SAFE ONLINE?

1. SHOW AN INTEREST

- Take an active interest in what your teenagers are doing while respecting their privacy
 - Ask them what they enjoy about being online and what they don't

2. HELP THEM PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

- Ask your teenagers how they are protecting themselves online, specially from people they don't know offline
- Remind teenagers of the risks of people trying to befriend you or asking for personal details
 - Never share full names or exact locations online or in apps
 - Discuss what to do if you teenagers wants to meet someone they met online

3. REMIND THEM TO STOP AND THINK BEFORE SHARING

- Don't post content immediately online
- Advise them to walk away from their device and ask themselves: "Why am I sharing this information? Could it harm me or other people? Is it kind?" The rule of "if in doubt, leave it out" can be helpful here.
- Talk to your teenager about the risks of asking for or sending certain kinds of photos

4. DISCUSS HOW TO BE SMART ONLINE

- Check the facts – not everything you see online is true, make sure to question what you see and find reliable sources of information.

5. DISRUPT UNHEALTHY HABITS

- Discuss what makes them feel happy and safe, and what makes them feel sad or stressed
 - If technology is making them feel bad, what are some things that can help?
- If technology is preventing them from sleeping or is controlling their time, remind them they can take back that control

6. TEENAGERS CAN SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER

Encourage them to:

- Talk and listen to their friends about what they are doing online and how it makes them feel
- Check in with their friends and make sure they are ok, especially if a friend is acting differently
 - Call out bad behaviour online and be a good online friend
- Be a good friend! Stand up to bullying and reach out when you see someone struggling. Be as good of a friend online as you are offline.
- Check in with your friends and make sure they are okay. Remind them everyone needs help sometime.

7. IF SOMETHING BAD HAS HAPPENED

- Ensure they have a trusted adult to talk to
- If a child's image has been shared, it's not their fault
- Reassure them that everyone makes mistakes: be supportive and be non-judgemental
- If they have experienced online harm, reinforce that you can work together to get help and resolve the problem

8. KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

- Be supportive if teenagers are seeking help from you. For example you could say something like "it's really brave of you to ask for help, we can find a solution."
 - Praise good offline behaviour to encourage good play habit

9. KEEP LEARNING TOGETHER

- Young people often know the risks and the benefits of digital platforms better than adults
 - Ask them to educate you about how they are protecting themselves and others
 - Encourage them to speak up and demand change to better protect children online

GAMING

Christmas brings new gaming devices & Games which in turn means your child being online more. Gamers will also use streaming sites to watch others, have live interaction and learn new techniques, tips and strategies but with this comes risk. Be aware of what sites your child is accessing, and who they are online talking to.

4 THINGS PARENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT CHILDREN WHO USE GAMING STREAMING SITES.



RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH GAMING STREAMING SITES

1 Inappropriate content:

- bad language
- themes of violence, aggression, or crude humour
- adult discussions and images
- references to drugs and alcohol.

2 Unmonitored interactions and cyberbullying:

- chat features allow viewers to interact with streamers and users, risking exposure to inappropriate messages
- the prevalence of negative comments and trolling during streams.

3 Potential for grooming:

- predators use platforms to connect with and manipulate children
- some users may pose as friendly, asking personal questions that can lead to children inadvertently sharing private information.



FREE FOOD IN FAVERSHAM

At this time of year many people struggle with feelings of loneliness and isolation. There are a number of organisations in Faversham and the surrounding areas offering support, food and hot meals during the festive period.

FAVERSHAM FOODBANK, Gospel Mission Hall, Tanner St

We offer emergency support with food parcels if you are experiencing a crisis.

Faversham Foodbank will be operating as normal through December.

Open Mondays 5-6.30pm and Wednesdays & Fridays 1.30-4pm

We do require clients to get vouchers from one of our referral agencies (<https://faversham.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/how-to-get-help/>).

FAVERSHAM UMBRELLA, Court St (near Tesco)

Open Tuesday - Friday 10am-3pm

Free soup Wednesday - every Wednesday from beginning of November.

Pay it Forward initiative - food and drink for those who would like a meal but cannot afford one.

Christmas Dinner - 18th and 19th December.

(paid for, but people can pay it forward or we can provide an amount for free).

Faversham Umbrella also offers:

Warm Space .

A wide range free sanitary products available in our toilets for all.

ABBEY PHYSIC COMMUNITY GARDEN, Abbey Place

Cooked meals provided from the kitchen until 21st December. Over Christmas, volunteers will be providing free food (for collection from Abbey Physic Community Garden). We run a pay it forward scheme. If you are able to contribute to this scheme to enable support for local people over Christmas, it would be very much appreciated.

Contact Abbey Physic Community Garden for more information. Tel: 01795 539915

Email: communitygarden@abbeyphysic.org

Winner of the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

COMMUNITY FOODSHARE at Faversham Baptist Church (behind the library)

Open every Friday 10 -11.30am

Free teas and coffees.

Surplus food available to all to take for free at 10am.

Please note: Food Share will not be open on Friday 27th December or Friday 3rd January.

COMMUNITY FRIDGE at West Faversham Community Centre

New area for surplus food available to all to take for free.

Open to all during the centre's opening hours.


FOOD FRIENDS

A meal sharing initiative that connects volunteers, who would love to deliver an extra portion of their home cooked food, as and when they can,

to a neighbour who would enjoy this along with a friendly chat.

If you would like a home cooked meal delivered with kindness and care, please contact us to have a chat with one of our friendly team on 01227 250410 or email hello@food-friends.co.uk.

Our meal sharing is free of charge and all of our volunteers are DBS and reference checked.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

For immediate assistance regarding mental health support and resources, please refer to the following organisations:

Home – Kooth Online mental health support
YoungMinds Online mental health support
Shout - Text "SHOUT" to 85258 for 24/7 support
Qwell: If you are an adult requiring mental health
Kent Resilience Hub Local support services

If you have any urgent concerns for a young person (self-harming/attempted suicide) please take directly to A&E and request Crisis Team or 999

For financial/ cost of living difficulties

Citizens Advice
Faversham Foodbank

For support around domestic abuse

SATEDA
Refuge
Oasis Domestic Abuse Service

For support with homelessness or housing issues

Porchlight
Shelter England

If you have urgent child protection concern please contact:

Kent Children's Portal <https://kccchildrens.kent.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home> 03000
411111

Or call 999 and report to Kent Police.

Safeguarding Parental Engagement Evening 30th January 2025 – Spotlight on Mental Health

We are pleased to announce that KOOTH are coming to the school on the 30th January to deliver two sessions to parents; 5-6pm and 6-7pm to parents and carers.

KOOTH will be giving advice on how as a parent we can help our children through their teenage years focussing on; self-harm, managing low mood and navigating stress and anxiety from exams, friendships and relationships. Being a parent can be tough! KOOTH & the Safeguarding Team will be there to talk with parents regarding any concerns.

If you are interested in attending please email the Safeguarding Officer Miss Beaumont

sbeaumont@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

The Safeguarding wishes you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!



Contact details for the safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead - nkamara@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - jlucas@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - sfrorath@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - amahmood@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - ncrouch@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk



Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

At The Abbey School, we strive to create a **safe and secure** environment for the school community. Our school is a **welcoming and inclusive place** where we all show one another respect and look out for each other.

We will not tolerate any **threatening, abusive or violent** behaviour and action will be taken when necessary.



The Abbey
School



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