



Alverstone Infant School

Safeguarding and SEND Newsletter - Spring 2025

This half term we have been thinking about staying safe on the internet and last week we recognised national **"Safer Internet day"**. The children have been learning how to stay safe online at school and at home and they know that they should never share personal information online. The children know that they should speak to a trusted adult, someone over the age of 18, if they are worried about anything.



If you have any questions or need some advice on safer internet use, please visit the below links or arrange to meet with Mrs Crosswell, our Computing leader

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2025>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

A is for Aspirations



This half term we have been focussing on the theme of **Aspirations** and "keeping safe".

The children have been learning about keeping themselves safe, safe secrets, medicine safety and people who help to keep them safe. In school, staff wear green lanyards and children know that these adults are "safe" adults they know as "trusted adults".

Next half term our focus will be **"Resilience"**: Rights and respect. The children will be learning about how to take care of themselves and their environment. We will also continue to look at staying safe online and looking after money.

If you would like to know more about our PSHE (SCARF) curriculum, please look at our website or ask your child's class teacher.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

Conversation starters for parents and carers: ONLINE CONTENT

Trying to start a conversation about online safety with children can be a daunting task. There are many reasons why children may not want to talk to adults about it. One might be that they don't think you'll understand or that you won't know how to help if they came to you with an online problem. It can also be hard to start a conversation about something that you might have limited knowledge about. However, with screen time increasing during the lockdown, it's important now more than ever, to be talking to children about what they are accessing online.

- 1 ASK THEIR MOTIVATION**
Sometimes it's easy to assume we know why children choose certain games or apps. It can seem obvious, like the child interested in football will be enthusiastic about the new FIFA game. But sometimes it can be more subtle than that. It could be that it's an outlet for their creativity or it might be that they like the look of the main character. Learning their motivation and knowing why they like it can help advising them on how to use it safely and help you discuss the pros and cons.
- 2 CULTIVATE A BLAME FREE CULTURE**
Children can often blame themselves if they come across something that scares them or makes them feel uncomfortable. There will be times when your child has gone against something that you have forbidden, however, most children do not intend to put themselves at risk. Therefore, it's important that your child is able to come to you with a problem and won't be blamed for it. Try to understand what happened and why and warn them of the dangers once more. Engaging in a fight you or disagreeing or suggesting they are in trouble for not listening may deter them from reporting any future concerns.
- 3 SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**
Starting a conversation by sharing something that you've seen or that has made you feel uncomfortable can be a great opener. Talking about your own feelings can help children realise that it isn't just them - adults can be affected too. You can then go into how you coped with it therefore indirectly giving children advice on how they can also cope in uncomfortable situations. You can also explain that the reason that you've chosen to talk to them about it is because talking helps. Children will hopefully be able to see the parallels in the experiences and mimic your behaviour in future.
- 4 TALK ABOUT THE NEWS**
Asking children what their response is to news stories around online safety can be revealing. For example, there has been a recent survey conducted by the BBC where they are currently campaigning for the application of age ratings and content warnings on video sharing platforms. What do they think about that? Can they think of a time when this would have helped themselves or someone they know? Are they against the idea? If so, why? Could they be accessing something they shouldn't be?
- 5 ASK FOR ADVICE**
It could be that you really do have a friend at work who is debating whether or not to let their child do something online, or it could be that you're bending the truth slightly, but hoping the outcome would be the same. Don't be afraid to ask others for advice. Not only will they should let the child use it, but also what would they tell the child to be aware of. What are the risks? This will help you understand the risks yourself and what to look out for in future.
- 6 MAKE TIME TO LISTEN**
When your child can't wait to tell you about their new game, always try and listen to what they say. We always have a lot on our minds, so it's easy for us to drift off onto other things, which may be more important. However, try to stay involved and ask them more details about aspects of the game/app. Children will appreciate your interest and the more questions you ask, the more you can find out. If you are overwhelmed, then they are less likely to tell you about it again in the future.
- 7 ASK THEM TO BE THE TEACHER**
Showing an interest in what children are accessing online is a great opportunity for you to learn something new as well. Children on the whole love sharing their experiences so by asking them to teach you one to use an app or play a game is not only a great way to bond, but you will also feel more empowered to talk about it. It is easy to shy away from conversations when the child perhaps knows more about the subject content than you do. This can help to turn this around.
- 8 USE SCHOOL MESSAGING**
It might be that your child's school has sent out a message about the CEOP number or to remind children to use the CEOP button to report content. Ask the children what they learned about these at school. When would they use the CEOP number? When would they need to use the CEOP button? What does it look like? Asking the children why the school thought that the information was so important that they sent out a message about it reinforces what they learnt whilst at school.
- 9 ASK ABOUT THE RISKS**
Many children may know what online risks are and will happily explain the potential dangers. Listen and try not to be overly shocked if they tell you something that disturbs you. This can then lead easily into you asking the question about what steps they are taking to look after themselves or what help they could seek if something goes wrong. Sometimes it's just nice to know that your children know the dangers and have taken steps to help reduce the risk for themselves - this is the ultimate goal.
- 10 ASK ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES**
Try asking open ended questions about roles and responsibilities online. Who is in control of the internet? Who is looking after you when you are online? Who decides what is appropriate for children to see? This can reveal a lot about a child's perception about who is responsible for their online safety. If they believe that it is not everyone else to keep them safe, then you know you need to have a conversation about how they can reduce their own risk.
- 11 ASK ABOUT SCHOOL ADVICE**
Sometimes it's hard to know what to warn children about. If there is a new app or game that your child has come across recently, ask them what they think their teacher would say about it. What advice would school give them? What have they been told about trusting people online or about fake news? Finding this out would be a good way to hear what advice they were given at school and help you reinforce the same message. Quick reminders about what to do if something makes them feel uncomfortable or who their trusted adults are can make all the difference.

Meet our expert
Heather Cardwell is a practising Online Safety Lead and senior school leader who is passionate about safeguarding children online and educating them around online risks. She has over 10 years as a Computing Lead and has successfully developed and implemented a whole school approach to online safety in schools, delivering online safety training to both school staff and parents and helping to roll-out a bespoke online safety policy across her local network of education settings.

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Know Yourself, Grow Yourself- Mental Health week 2025

This year we explored the theme of know yourself, grow yourself. During mindfulness sessions and assemblies, we discussed how the more we can understand about ourselves, the more prepared we are to express our emotions and take on life's ups and downs.

Some of the activities involved watching clips of Inside Out 2 and recognising emotions. One emotion that we discussed was anxiety. This is always a challenging topic to discuss with children of this age but with a growing increase in anxiety in young children it is important that we recognise this and support children and their key adults in how to effectively seek help.

Anxiety is a normal human response to feeling threatened or in danger, even if that threat or danger is a thought, image or memory. Anxiety can become a real problem if the thoughts, emotions (feelings) and physical sensations are very strong, happen even when there is no real danger or if it lasts for a long time. Supporting a child with anxiety can be challenging, but there are many effective ways for parents and carers to help.

- Recognise the signs: Children might not always express their anxiety in words. Look for changes in behaviour, such as clinginess, irritability, or avoiding certain situations.
- Create a calm, predictable environment: Routine can help reduce anxiety. Knowing what to expect provides comfort, so try to keep schedules consistent and offer reassurance.
- Validate their feelings: Let your child know that it's okay to feel anxious and that everyone experiences these feelings sometimes. Avoid dismissing their fears but instead, acknowledge them and express understanding.
- Teach coping strategies: Encourage relaxation techniques like deep breathing, mindfulness, or journaling. Helping children learn how to manage stress will serve them throughout life.
- Model healthy coping mechanisms: Children often learn by example, so if they see you handling your own anxiety in a calm and constructive way, they are more likely to do the same.
- Maintain open communication: Keep the lines of communication open and let your child know that they can talk to you whenever they feel anxious or scared.
- Be patient: Overcoming anxiety takes time. Be patient and celebrate small victories along the way. By staying patient, empathetic, and proactive, parents can make a big difference in helping their children manage anxiety effectively.

CAMHS (Children Adult Mental Health Service) have developed workbooks which young people and families can use on their website. It provides a lot of useful information about why we experience anxiety as well as several different types of techniques to help manage and lessen anxiety.

If you are concerned that your child's anxiety is escalating or unmanageable, please speak to Stacey Hodson- SENCo or Diane McEwan – Child and Family support worker.

Other useful websites to access are:

