

SAFEGUARDING BULLETIN

Issue 6 (October 2022)



Welcome to our sixth ALNS safeguarding bulletin where we are hoping to share with you the latest knowledge, tips and support services for various issues in order that we can work together to keep your children safe. Each bulletin will focus on a different area of safeguarding.

Key Focus – Online Safety – Harmful Online Content

What do we mean?

There is no legal definition for what is meant by **Harmful Online Content**, but the NSPCC defines it as words, images and videos that are legal to create and view but result in a high risk of causing physical and/or psychological harm. Examples include:

Content such as self-harm and suicide promotion or eating disorder related (#thinspro, #proana #ProED) which can affect Mental Health

Extreme views (the Incel movement for example)

Online Challenges (often physically dangerous)

Promotion of gendered violence or against minorities

Themes of misogyny etc that influence teenage boys in particular

Pornography

Case Study One: - Andrew Tate

Tate is an online “personality” and prior to that was a pro kickboxer. He describes himself as a “success coach”

His posts centre around themes of misogyny and promoting and glorifying violence against women, influencing teenage boys particularly.

He was removed from all major platforms in August 2022 but prior to that had 11 billion TikTok views, 4m twitter followers and 4.7m Instagram ones (good news – his popularity is now thought to be down by 60%!).

Case Study Two: - Molly Russell

Molly was a 14-year-old British girl who died by suicide in 2017. The Coroner’s verdict (Oct 2022) was that she “died by suicide after suffering the effects of online content”.

During the inquest it was presented that she had viewed, shared or commented on over 2000 pieces of content on self-harm and suicide, in the 6 months preceding her death and the conclusion was that “The internet contributed to her death in a more than minimal way.” (Coroner report)

Why are teenagers particularly vulnerable to harmful online content?

They might be attracted to the glamorous lifestyle or “fast fame” of someone like Andrew Tate (he is referred to as “Top G” – which is used to mean Top Gangster - feared and respected by all). Teenagers are often looking for advice or acceptance whilst navigating a tricky “new world” and sometimes experience feelings of isolation. In addition, they turn to the internet for information, to be able to keep up with peers and help make sense of their world.

Be aware of ALGORITHMS – leading to more and more of the same and more and more extreme content!

In School Support

- We cover online safety across many subjects and during tutor time too.
- We encourage discussion, we don’t “shut it down”. We discuss the dangers and encourage empathy. We also try to develop solutions – looking at using respectful language vs harmful language and positive media role models.
- Any member of the school community – staff, student or parent can report concerns or seek advice from the designated safety lead – Mrs Holness or her deputy safeguarding lead – Mr Fenner.

How can you support your child?

Past Safeguarding Bulletins:

[February 2022 Safeguarding Bulletin.pdf](#)

[April 2022 Safeguarding Bulletin.pdf](#)

[Summer Term 2022 Safeguarding Bulletin.pdf](#)

Useful resources:

- www.Childline.org.uk – in particular a resource called “Ask Sam” – this is a problem page where children can ask questions and the replies are made public for all to learn and get support from.
- www.nspcc.org.uk lots of resources and support. Their report from February 2022 “Children’s experience of legal but harmful content online” is an interesting read.
- www.Reportharmfulcontent.com – allowing anyone to report content they find concerning online
- www.Thinkuknow.co.uk – useful resources for parents and for children (specialist content for parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities too)

If you have any safeguarding concerns you want to discuss at school please contact your child’s tutor, their Head of House or the designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Holness.

Be aware of the signs that your child might be impacted:

- Replicating the behaviours or views they see or hear (remember they are still growing emotionally so these views might well not even be understood by them)
- Decreasing low self-esteem due to comparing themselves with characters such as Tate.
- Becoming a victim or perpetrator of online bullying
- Having an emotional reaction to content - e.g., difficulty sleeping

Talk, talk, talk!

- **Talk to your child (research from the NSPCC says 1 in 5 parents never talk about online safety with their children).** Its hard for the child to approach adults with any concerns on this topic for fear of judgement or reproach (as by the stage they need to talk – they know something is “wrong” with the behaviour)
- Remain calm – the internet is a tricky topic and all children (even those with a safeguarding lead for a parent!) make mistakes or navigate to places unintentionally at some point.
- Be honest about your own online behaviour – what are you role modelling?

Check!

Check their phones – the most common platforms for sharing harmful content are Youtube, Tiktok, Pinterest and Instagram (*The Royal Society of Public Health report (2017) “status of mind” named Instagram the most damaging of the commonly used apps to children.*) Consider Parental Controls (look in the settings section of a device). Meta have introduced a feature called “Family Centre” a hub of safety tools which is worth a look and Tiktok have a “family pairing” feature.

Keeping phones out of bedrooms really helps decrease online safety risks, improves sleep routines and therefore behaviour patterns and ability to concentrate at school (71% of teens with a phone are allowed to take it to bed!)

