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# Hampshire Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service

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**Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

**Responsibilities for Parents, Guardians and Carers**

## What does 'safeguarding' mean?

Safeguarding is about protecting children from abuse or neglect. It also means making sure children have all they need to stay healthy and well and that they are supported to get access to health care.

This booklet contains information for parents and carers about how to safeguard their children.

## Leaving children at home alone



There is no legal age at which children may be left at home alone, but parents can be prosecuted for neglect if it puts a child at risk of injury or suffering.

### It is advised that:

- children under the age of 12 should not be left alone at home for a long period of time as they are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency;
- children under the age of 16 should not be left alone at home overnight;
- a child should never be left at home alone if they do not feel comfortable with this, regardless of their age;
- no child under 16 should be left on their own to care for someone younger than themselves or someone whose support needs are high.

## Helping children to stay safe online



When online, children and young people can learn new things, get help with homework, express themselves creatively and play games and connect with friends and family.

There are risks, but by understanding and talking about the dangers you can help keep your child safe online.

You can find more information and guidance about Safeguarding children on the EMTAS website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emas/safeguarding>.

You can find comprehensive information and guidance on

<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers> including how to talk to your child about internet safety and how to set up parental controls to help keep your child safe online.



## What do children do online and through social networking?

- Connect with friends and make new ones, browse the internet for information, chat with others and play games
- Search for content using search engines like Google
- Create, share, comment on or 'like' images or videos through apps, such as Musical.ly, Instagram and Snapchat
- Keep up-to-date with friends on social networking websites eg Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Live-stream videos through sites such as Facebook Live, Instagram Live and YouTube
- Communicate with others using voice and video chat or instant messaging. This can take place on social networks, through messaging apps like WhatsApp and in some types of games
- Play games through websites, apps or game consoles



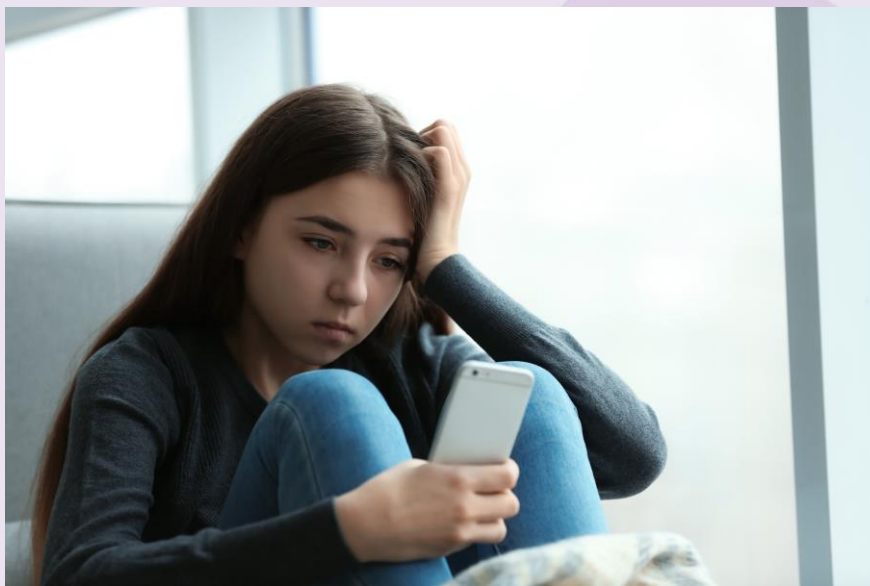
## What are the risks?



- Children may be at risk because of their own behaviour, for example, by sharing too much personal information – their name, the school they attend, even a photo that can be linked to an address
- Children can be contacted by bullies or people who groom or seek to abuse them. Grooming is when someone builds a relationship with a child so they can sexually abuse, exploit or traffic them. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a stranger, sometimes by an adult who is pretending to be another child, or by someone they know
- Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is forced or tricked into sexual activities. Sexual abuse or exploitation can happen online (eg a child could be forced to make, view or share child abuse images or videos or take part in sexual activities on conversations online)
- Cyberbullying. This is any type of bullying that happens online
- Children can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising in apps, games and websites
- Age-inappropriate or unreliable content can be available to children. They can also download malware such as viruses or trojan horses which can damage the computer or result in all information on the computer being stolen
- Pornography is the access to inappropriate and/or illegal content of a sexual nature

- Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexual messages. It's online abuse if a child or young person is pressured or coerced into creating or sending these types of images and it is both damaging to the child in the images and illegal for another person to share such images with others.
- Online gaming can provide opportunities for unwanted contact from others online who may wish to bully or abuse them

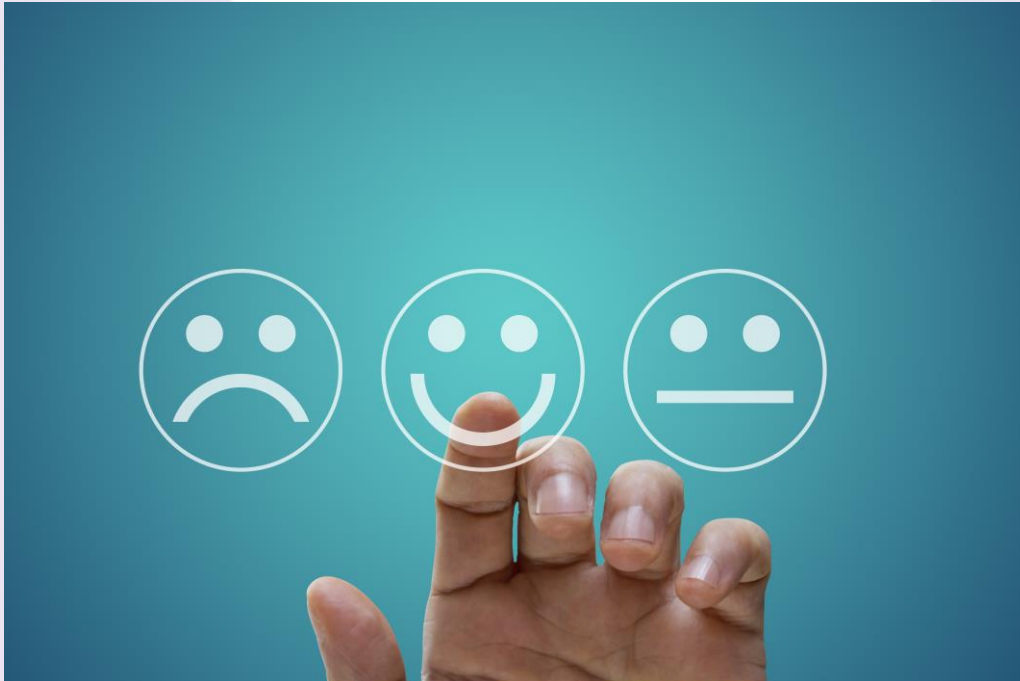
### **What are the possible signs that all is not well?**



#### **Your child may be**

- becoming withdrawn and spending more time on devices than usual
- secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online or on their mobile phone
- behaving differently e.g. becoming anxious or aggressive
- showing no interest in other activities
- having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their electronic devices
- receiving presents from people you don't know to be their friends
- going out more but being secretive about where they're going and/or whom they are meeting
- spending money online
- stealing
- becoming involved in alcohol or drugs

## How can you help keep your child safe online?



- Talk to your child regularly and in a non-accusative way about what they are doing online – what games they are playing, the apps they're using. If you and your child are used to talking about their online activities, they are more likely to come to you if they are worried about anything that may happen to them online in the future.
- Encourage your child to keep personal information safe and not share it with strangers, learn how to block pop ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchasing on devices where possible and use a family email address when filling in online forms.
- Children should not have access to the internet in their bedrooms, just in family spaces where parents can monitor what they're doing.
- Set up parental controls.
- Check the age rating of apps your child wants to access. YouTube is rated 17+ which means that content accessible on YouTube may be unsuitable for children under the age of 17. For Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp it's 12+.
- Report inappropriate conversations, messages, images and behaviours to NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Reinforce with your child the importance of telling a trusted adult straight away if someone is bullying them or making them feel uncomfortable, or if one of their friends is being bullied online.

- It's important for children to consider the reliability of online material and to be aware that it might not be true and/or could be written with a bias.
- Talk to your child about online friends and teach them that new friends made online may not be who they say they are. Make sure your child knows **never** to arrange to meet an online friend in real life on their own.
- Report to the police any concerns about your child being subject to inappropriate online contact or approach by another person. If they are the victim of online bullying, you can do this via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk))

**If you think a child is in immediate danger, don't delay: call the police on 999.**

