



Safeguarding and Child Protection at St George's Primary



June 2023 Newsletter

Change

As we approach the end of the academic year, children will be experiencing and getting ready for change. Some children may take this in their stride and not worry about it but for some children this may be more difficult. Here are some tips to support your child with change:

- Normalise endings and changes bringing up complex feelings
- Prepare for changes and endings if you know they're coming
- Create room to cope with an unexpected ending
- Talk about ways you cope with change
- Celebrate endings with rituals and make space for memories



These tips come from the website <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/> and each tip is explained in more detail.

This website has loads of great ideas for helping your child with a range of things such as anger, friendships, parental separation and anxiety.

Grooming

Like bullying, grooming has become a part of our society over the years. In the past, this occurred face-to-face, through the manipulation of underaged individuals by persons older than them. Over the past three decades of the internet, online relationships between individuals have become normalised. Young people and increasingly children, get to know people they've never met through video games, Instagram and snapchat. But this has gone hand in hand with an increase in child-grooming using these devices. The rise of face changer apps, voice changer apps and loopholes in sectors like the dating app market have made it easier than ever before to groom children. At Victim Support, they've put together a page which focuses on this issue. On it you'll find a guide to what grooming is, and how young people can help themselves be aware of the issue.



Please follow the link: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/youco/typescrime/sex-crimes/grooming/>

If you have any concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person, telephone Children's Social Care on 0300 123 6720.

You can also speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads at St George's - Andy Purcell, Nicola Gregson or Rob Horne.

For information and advice go to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about INFLUENCERS

In today's digital age, social media influencers play an increasingly significant role in shaping the opinions, interests and behaviours of our children. While many of these individuals can have a positive effect, influencer culture can also present certain risks – such as encouraging consumerism, affecting self-esteem and blurring trustworthiness. To help ensure a safe online environment for young people, it's vital to maintain open communication, set sensible boundaries, promote a healthy self-image and teach digital media literacy. Our guide delves deeper into all of these.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

HEIGHTENED CONSUMERISM

A major way that influencers make money is through brand partnerships and sponsored content. As a result, children who follow them may be exposed to a steady stream of advertising: this can lead to materialistic attitudes, unrealistic expectations and an increased desire to have the latest products. Many influencers have built huge brand empires around their large, impressive following.

THE SOFT SELL

Some influencers aren't always transparent about the motivations behind their posts, blurring the lines between genuine recommendations and paid-for promotions – and young people sometimes find it difficult to distinguish authentic content from advertising. Many major social platforms have taken steps to make sponsored content and ads easier to identify, but it remains an area of concern.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Inspired by their favourite influencers, children may start sharing more of their own lives online – which could reveal personal information or details about their daily routine. This openness can put them at risk of cyberbullying or even predatory behaviour. This is exacerbated by live streaming, which gives young people no time to consider the potential consequences of saying too much.

UNDERMINING SELF-ESTEEM

Many influencers share images and videos of themselves and their activities, which are often painstakingly curated and edited to present an idealised version of their life. Children who follow these influencers may develop distorted expectations about body image and the concept of beauty, which can potentially lead to negative self-esteem and even mental health issues.

Advice for Parents & Carers

KEEP TALKING

Chat to your child about the content they consume on social media and the influencers that they like. Encourage them to think critically about what they see and hear online, and listen to any concerns they might have. Maintaining this line of open, honest communication can help your child to make informed decisions about which individuals they follow and what content they engage with.

SET SOME BOUNDARIES

Agree age-appropriate boundaries for your child's social media use, including time limits and privacy settings (the two major operating systems on mobile devices, Android and iOS, have these controls baked in). Try to keep an eye on your child's online activity and discuss it regularly with them – including reminding them of the potential risks that can arise from following influencers.

SUPPORT A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE

Reinforce your child's awareness that real life isn't usually as picture perfect as it may appear on social media – and how some content (particularly that of influencers) is often curated, staged or edited to look more glamorous. If possible, highlight examples of other influencers who share authentic, relatable material which acknowledges their imperfections and struggles as well.

PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY

Talk to your child about the concepts of sponsored content, advertising and potential influencer bias. Teach them to critically evaluate the information they're presented with online and to consider the possible reasons behind content creation. This can help young people develop the skills to make healthier decisions about the influencers they choose to follow and the content they consume.

Meet Our Expert

A former director of digital learning and currently a deputy headmaster and DSL, Brendan O'Keefe's experience and expertise gives him a clear insight into how modern digital systems impact the experience of children, staff and parents – and which strategies help to ensure that the online world remains a useful educational tool rather than a minefield of risks.



NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday