

Parent on-line Safety Newsletter

Hello,

As the internet and social media has become such an integral part of day to day life, we feel it is important that we share with you the measures we have in place to protect our students online and also some of the growing concerns in education around online safety.

Protecting our students

We use the services of Smoothwall to help us protect our students from accessing harmful content online and also to allow us to monitor student activity to ensure they are safe. This is both on college computers and any 'Bring Your Own' device such as a mobile phone or laptop that accesses our WiFi.

Smoothwall's filtering service allows us to reduce the risk of students being exposed to harmful content such as explicit material, radicalisation, cyberbullying and other online harms.

We are able to customise and block categories of sites that we believe pose a risk. For example; adult themes, weapons, social media and violence.

Smoothwall's monitoring service, allows us in real time, to monitor students activity online to identify harmful behaviours, communication and risks, such as cyber bullying or grooming.

Smoothwall alerts our Safeguarding team when a student tries to access a harmful content or when their online activity is assessed to be a concern. A member of the safeguarding team will speak to students to ensure that they are safe and parents/carers will be informed if necessary.

Online risks

Online bullying (cyber bullying)

It can be easy for young people online to behave in a way that they wouldn't face to face. It is important that we all teach our young people how to behave online. Examples of online bullying include sending hurtful messages, leaving unkind comments, telling lies or sharing photographs of someone without their permission. These things might happen on a social media app, like Snapchat or while they are gaming.

Internet Matters have produced a list of 'Top Internet Manners' which can be found here:

[Internet-Matters-Tips-Internet-Manners.pdf \[internetmatters.org\]](#)



If you are concerned that your child is being bullied online, please encourage them to speak to a trusted adult. You can report bullying behaviour within apps as well as blocking people so they can no longer make contact. You can find out more information here:

[Worried about something that's happened online? \[thinkuknow.co.uk\]](#)

Online sexual abuse

'1 in 4 teenagers receives unwanted sexual messages online'

Sadly, there is a significant rise in children being groomed and coerced online and it can happen to anyone. The INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION have developed the 'TALK' checklist to help parents and carers talk to young people about staying safe online – you can access it here:

[TALK Checklist by Internet Watch Foundation | Home \[iwf.org.uk\]](#)



Websites of concern

We have recently become aware of some websites that can be used to cause harm to young people. **Childline** have useful guides on staying safe whilst playing games online:

[Online gaming | Childline](#)

Discord is a platform for people with similar interests to share and Communicate, it is popular among the gaming community.



Some of the servers on Discord are themed around harmful topics, there are also reports of illegal content being shared on the site.

Discord has been found to act as a hub for extreme right wing socialising and cyber bullying.



Roblox is an online game creator, the games are created by amateurs and played worldwide by users.

There have been reports that extremist groups are using Roblox to target young people and share violent material.

The National College offers a free online course for parents and carers in online safety – you can access it here: [Annual Award in Online Safety for Parents & Carers of Children aged 14-18 \[nationalcollege.com\]](#)

Websites that offer useful information and advice regarding online safety:

[Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Stay safe online: a guide for parents and children \[iwf.org.uk\]](#)

[Parent Zone](#)

[Use Report Remove to remove a nude image shared online](#)

www.childline.org.uk

