TRANSCRIPTS

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to online guidance for adults caring for young people. My name is PC Erica Hills, and I'll be joined by PC Rachel Williams. So we are school engagement officers, and we've produced a set of bite size videos covering issues that have been raised by parents and schools around online safety for children. So we've provided the school with an information sheet to support these videos, and then this, you'll find all the websites that we refer to and some of the videos for you to watch on your own.

HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE?

So one thing that we hear a lot is that the online world is a different world and parents and carers talk about there being an online world and a real world. Well for our children online life, it is real life, so we need to think of online as another space where young people spend time rather than a different world. So they could be at the cinema, they could be at the park, they could be at school or they could be online and we as parents need to be understanding of that space.

So as with adults, young people's happiness is linked to being connected to others, and as adults we use WhatsApp and Facebook to catch up with people and make plans for the future. It shows us what our friends are up to in an instant without having to worry that we haven't text them or called them in a while. And it's the same for children when they go online so they can play games together. They can video chat, they can build a whole world together in Roblox. And so this is where we need to be. Having those conversations with our children.

We need to be positive about the Internet and the good that it can bring, rather than just the negative. So in digital romance study, it was found that young people want the adults in their life to talk to them about the opportunities brought about by the Internet and not just the risks, and that they want their parents and carers to share their own experiences and make mistakes with them so that they can learn from this.

So even as an adult, it can be difficult to navigate the Internet and we're always learning through our own experiences. And it's the same for our children. So we just need to be there to help teach them in the best way that we can and try and find that balanced view for our children and show positivity about the Internet. That way, when you do have something negative and serious to point out to children, there will be more likely to take note. Because they, they might think, well, this must be serious because mum or dad or auntie is so positive about the Internet normally and that it must be a serious matter and them not just trying to ruin my fun.

A BALANCED VIEW

Hi everyone.

So I'm Rachel Williams and I'm a PC. I've been a PC for 17 years. I've also got a 25 year old son. And so what we're going to talk about now is having a bit more of a balanced view. So I know it

can be very overwhelming sometimes with technology and protecting your children and some of the concerns that some people have, parents in particular (...) the time that their children spend online and who your children are talking to.

You worry that maybe they might get bullied online and that they will not learn in the way that we know from when we were children from books and obviously there's a lot more that they can learn and doesn't have to be just on books they can use obviously online as well.

So inappropriate images, we worry about them seeing things that they shouldn't see and we can talk about this more later and what we also need to do to balance out is just think about the positives that we can get from technology and from being online. Obviously the most recent event was the pandemic, COVID. And you know a lot of us had to work from home and we also had to have our children study from home and to be in touch with the schools and the teachers in some circumstances via the laptops or computers online.

So that was a massive positive and it was able, you know, for everyone to stay in touch with family and friends and to socialise, to do homework, research, to learn new skills. And my son, years and years ago, when he was a young teenager, learned how to play guitar via YouTube and lessons that you can get online. So, you know, there's a lot of skills that you can obtain by just researching.

And you know it's really helpful. So you can also socialize, you can play games, there's entertainment, films, music and so you know, we just have to remember to sort of balance those fears that we may have with all the positives that are there as well. So if you have any questions at the end of all of our inputs then please let your school know and if we can answer those questions at all, then we will do that.

CEOP 6 VALUES

So we're now going to talk about values and we've got 6 CEOP values and CEOP stands for Child Exploitation Online Protection and that's from the National Crime Agency. So the first value would be safeguarding. I think we can all agree that safety and well-being is always a first and a priority for our children and young people.

And number two would be approached from the perspective of the child. So understanding what being online means to the young person and explaining positives as well as any risks to them, and trying not to stop them from using the games and all the sites that they want to use. Unless of course there are some real concerns and risks with that and you would have a conversation. And explain that to them, because if you were to not have the conversation and you'd be adamant and you would just ban them from using whatever and everything, then it's likely to have the opposite effect and then you won't know what your children are using and you won't be there to be able to give advice and be able to step in. And they may not come to you when they do have concerns. So it's much better to sort of keep that dialogue open.

Number three is promoting dialogue and understanding so young people feel safety when they are listened to and when they have someone they trust that they can speak to. Now that isn't always the parent or the carer. It could be somebody else in their life. It could be a teacher, it could be a relative, it could be an older sibling or it could be a friend of the family. So as long as

they have someone that they trust that they can talk to. And this can be a major positive in your life and in theirs.

So number four would be empower and enable children. So children always have the right to be protected and supported and we're there to help them build confidence and to build their skills, whether that be online or in person. And we're there to help them learn and point them in the right direction. And we're helping them navigate the online world as well as we help them to navigate the world in person. So say, for example, e-mail or text where you get from an unknown source and you open it and you might open and click on a link which wouldn't necessarily be wise to do. And I've certainly learned and I don't do that. It's dangerous and I don't know what that link is going to give me, so I delete them now. If I don't know who it's from, I delete. So sharing that information with young people and making them aware as they get their new technology and their first phone is going to help support them.

So number 5 is never frighten or scaremonger. So alarmist education can be very risky and ineffective and we need to avoid shocking or scaring young people because they will remember this much more so than the actual message that you were trying to convey to them, so it will have the opposite effect. So we try not to. We try not to scare, OK.

And number 6 is challenging victim blaming. So we have a responsibility to challenge any victim blaming language. It is never the fault of those who have been harmed okay, we need to remember that. So we as parents and professionals can help to build confidence and we can also do that by having conversations and by staying calm. Even, maybe, when we might feel angry and we need to stay calm and have a conversation and in this way, you're going to build the confidence of that young person in order that they will come back to you and talk to you should they need to in future. So it's really important to just stay calm and have a conversation. And usually when you're feeling angry, it's because you're fearful of what may have happened to your child and what they may have done and that they've put themselves possibly in danger or at risk. So just, you know, just have a conversation.

APPS, GAMES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

So just because an app or website can be accessed by children, it doesn't mean that it is safe for children. So what we would advise is that if your child has a new app or a new game that you look at it first. So play the game, look at who can contact your child and then make use of those parental controls within the game. So you may recognize some of the apps in the games on the slide here, and I'm just going to highlight some of these to you.

So you may recognise Instagram, they have the live streaming function and you may also have heard of the phrase sliding into DM's. So this means that people that your children don't know can send messages to them, and this is also the same for Facebook and other apps.

So next to that, we have Snapchat so they can chat on here. They have live screen, take funny photos and share them and also quite a good function on here is that you can track where your child is and using the location services on on this app and it's good for you. But you also need to check the settings so that strangers cannot track them as well.

And then we move on to the game. So you might recognize Fortnite here, so that is a 13 plus game and it's basically a combat teamwork game. So it will feature guns and violence. And one of the features on here is that they have live, unmoderated chat during the play.

And then the one next to that is Roblox. So on here you can make a virtual world so users can create games within games so they can build a theme, park, a hair salon, or you can just sit and chat with your friends in your newly built home. This app does ask for their verification of a child's age if they are over 13, then that will unlock the voice chat function. If they are under 13, they won't have voice chat, but they will still have access to chat boxes, so messaging. However, with parental controls, you can turn these off and you can also control who they chat to. So on this game there has been some inappropriate content, such as sex rooms and beheadings. These are removed by the platform. However, they have to be aware of them and to remove them. So this is just something for you to watch out for.

So then we move down to the bottom of the slide. So we have Discord and this is a minimum age of 15, but it is aimed at adults. If your children play Fortnite, there is a really good chance that they will also be on this because it's essentially a gamers chat site. So they have text, voice, video, messaging. They can also send messages direct to each other or as a large group. So on this app there have been some hate groups identified along with child images being sent to accounts.

You then have Omegle, which is the blue symbol at the bottom. So this is a minimum age of 18, or 13 with parental permission, and the danger of this app is that pairs are randomly assigned to each other. So you will have one person named as you and the other person named as the stranger. And then you can video and text call.

You then have Tumblr, so in 2022, 50% of the users on Tumblr were 24 years old and younger, and their tagline is it lets you efficiently share anything. And so on here there is a lot of pornography. There's also blogs on suicide and anorexia and bulimia. Idealisation. Now with this app, there is a safe setting where you can filter out words. However, some users will use abbreviations or obscure words to hide what their content is, so your children may not be looking for these things, but they might may stumble across them because of what they're called.

We then have Switch, which is the purple box, so this is one of the world's most popular live streaming platforms and it has 140 million users and it's really popular of gamers, but it's also expanded to music and sports as well. So young people will use this to watch other users play games, discover new games and tips, and it's quite similar to YouTube where you can set up your own channel or subscribe to users that you like. So it has an age rating of 13 plus, however, there is no age verification when you sign up. So on this app you can video and you can text chat. There is live streaming and the risks are with all live streaming platforms is that there is no way to moderate the live streams as they happen in real time. So content can only be reported afterwards and there's no safety settings in place to stop young people accessing certain channels or certain chats. And in turn this can then result in unwanted contact via private messages. And on this app those messages are called whispers. So there are controls to block whispers from people, and that they don't know. And there's also a report feature if your child receives or comes across any upsetting comments, and there's also a block button as well.

So, live streaming. Most of the apps and shown on this slide do have the live streaming function, so more and more apps are enabling live streaming and this carries the risk your child has no

control over who is commenting on that stream and what they then post on that feed. So what we do find is that when perpetrators target children, they will pressure them to share images whilst on live stream and what they do is they work in groups and they will post rapid comments and that's to pressure them to do something that they would not normally do.

So Common Sense Media is a really great site and it rates just about every app, game, social media site, even films, and it rates them as to how safe they are, what the risks are, if there's nudity, violence, alcohol consumption, etcetera. And this will be shared at the links at the end.

So I just want to talk to you next about parental controls. So parental controls have been designed to help you manage your child's online activities. So a few examples of the controls that are available in the apps. So using Instagram again, you can actually filter and hide offensive comments or words from appearing in the comments or private messages. You can turn off likes and you can turn off comments. You can also block people who are abusive in their comments and then it compiles a list of those people. However, it is worth noting that nothing is totally foolproof and it shouldn't replace that support and the guidance that you're giving your child to help them feel safer. OK. And so, for more information on this, there is step by step instructions on setting up parental controls, and that is on internetmatters.org and we will give you the link to that website with the supporting information.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying that takes place online using electronic media such as mobile phones, and it can be carried out by one person or a group of people. So types of bullying can include blackmail, threats, abusive comments, spreading rumours, sharing embarrassing pictures or creating fake profiles on social media sites. And so the building can be one of the toughest types of bullying to cope with. Smartphones and other devices means that there is no escape in it, and so it continues to happen around the clock. And then those words and those images are preserved online for others to see, which can contribute to more people joining in on that bullying.

So what is the law around cyberbullying? Well, it's not a crime in itself. However, the acts and the behaviour of in those incidents of online bullying can amount to offences and they would be dealt with accordingly by the police. So we do have laws to assist us and to deal with cases of cyber bullying. And those include the protection from harassment act and also the Malicious Communications Act.

So how do you know if your child is being bullied? Well, there's no one sign to indicate that a child is being bullied online. However, there are a number of things, and that as parents you can be aware of, which may indicate that they are being bullied, especially those that are out of character. And it may just prompt you to ask them, you know, are you OK? So these things could be that they're appearing anxious, upset or abrupt after using their device, and it may be that they're more protective of their device or they're using it more or less than usual, and they don't want to talk about it if you're bringing this up. They could have mood changes and they could be avoiding school or social situations. And they may also complain of an illness. And. And it is well evidence that children who are being bullied do suffer effects on their mental health as a result of stress and anxiety.

So what can you do? Well, the first thing is to reassure them. So the advice from the NSPCC is to let them know that you want to help them put a stop to it. And then encourage them to talk to someone that they trust. And just to be aware that that person might not be you, it could be a family friend or someone from school. And then to reassure them that they are believed and that there is support to help them and making sure that they know how to access that those relevant services.

So how can you help them cope and manage the process? So you need to listen when they need to talk and keep calm and don't judge them. And also don't underestimate the effect that it's having on them. So help them find coping mechanisms which don't involve taking their devices from them, because that can then cause additional stress and additional anxieties. And you need to be led by them. So it's really important that they are in control of the situation where possible and that they understand their choices and that they're given time to think and decide what is best for them.

So if bullying is taking place on a social network site such as Facebook or Twitter or Snapchat, there is a function which allows the user to block someone so you can contact them directly, and they do have policies in place to remove appropriate material, and they can even delete a bullies account. And then there's also report function on this site. So there is a website called Net Aware and that's in partnership with the NSPCC and O2 and what they have on there is it's an A-Z of social media sites and apps and with information specifically for parents.

So what if you need help? So often parents are unable to resolve the situation for their child alone as it is so complex and sensitive or severe in some cases. So it may be necessary to involve the school or the club or the youth group or even the police to help address what is happening. And it is perfectly understandable that when parents require help and it is often needed to resolve some cases of cyberbullying. So in a case where your child is subject to severe or persistent bullying, it is recommended that all emails and messages and screenshots of social media posts are stored as evidence of the bullying. And although, as I said, bullying is not a crime in itself, the behaviours and the actions of the bullies can be. And also please ask your child not to retaliate.

NUDES AND SEXTING

So sexting is to take, send, post or share nude and sexual pictures with others, and it's becoming increasingly common activity among children and young people because it's often considered by them as normal, harmless fun or flirting. And there are a number of reasons that young people do sext.

So one is that they see it as a normal part of sexual exploration and, you know, within their modern teen culture. And it could be peer pressure. So they're being directly asked to send those pictures. So it could be fear of being laughed at or bullied if they don't. And in some relationships it is expected and some young people will think that if they refuse and their partner will break up with them for someone who will send an image. And it can be used as trophies. So the more pictures that someone has on their phone, the more popular or more admired they are by their friends. They may send nudes to get attention of someone that they like and or they want to be noticed. And also it may be easier for them to engage in nudity or sexual flirting and then face to

face. They may feel more comfortable and that way. They also may have trust in that person that they're sending it to, and who is more, you know, likely to be a partner. And they also may think that what they send can be erased completely after it has been sent.

So what are the risks? So when sending nudes, young people may be at risk of exploitation, blackmail or bullying, especially if the photos are shared past the intended recipient. So what we'd like is for you to be having conversations with your children. So talking to your child about nudes, it can be an awkward conversation for both of you. If you feel unable to do so, then it may be that you do ask another person who your child trusts to speak to them. But it is ultimately important to have these conversations. So talk with them about the reasons why they may send a nude and then you can then talk them through the possible consequences of sending nudes. And most importantly, who they can speak to if they do send a nude and it gets shared. And let them know that they can always come to you. However, if they feel that they can't come to you and for whatever reason, then you should advise them that they should talk to an adult that they trust.

So what is the law? So taking, possessing, sharing, showing and distributing indecent images of a child under 18 is an offence and offences against a child under 18 can also be committed by a child. So the law recognizes that most cases of sexting happen because of a growing trend and sharing pictures in a relationship has become part of a young person's social and sexual development. So as a police force, we understand that we can use discretion with regards to sending nudes where it has happened within a consensual and age appropriate relationship. So first and foremost, we look to safeguard young people to educate them and not criminalise. However, in cases where there are aggravating factors, it may be necessary for the police to take action with the young people involved and aggravating factors could include things like wide age gaps, blackmail or threats.

So there are some good resources out there. So the NSPCC, if a nude image has been shared of your child and you can report it using their report and remove tool and which can be found on their website. And you also have CEOP and if you think that your child has been at risk of online sexual abuse or grooming. You can report your concerns directly to them. And then we also be sending you the links to a set of videos, and these are from the CEOP 'Think You Know' website. So there's four videos which follow 15 year old Harry who has shared a nude photo with his girlfriend. And the videos cover his parents reaction, the conversations they've had with him, his reasons for sharing and the consequences of this. So the links for that video will be shared with you by the school.

CURIOUS CONVERSATIONS

So it can feel really hard to keep them safe and it's something that most parents find really difficult and worry about so much. It can be really daunting when it's about technical issues and online as well, and we can sometimes feel overwhelmed. I know I certainly have done in the past, but let's just take a deep breath and break it down.

What is actually required? So we just need to listen. We need to talk, support, share and try your best to not be negative. Have honest and open conversations with your children. Help them learn. Don't let them push you out, and don't give up on those conversations. Hopefully we have good conversations with our children about many other things, and online matters should

shouldn't be any different. As parents and adults, we are there to help them to become equipped to cope, as there are apps and games out there that are not age appropriate and have some boundaries in place from the start which will help a lot.

So who are they online with? Encouraging being online with people that are the appropriate age and hopefully people that are known to the child and letting them know if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable or scared that they can come and talk to you about this. Talk about safety online. What if someone asked them personal questions and asks the personal details? Actually, ask your child what would they do in these circumstances? Explain to them why they should not in any circumstances, give out personal details online, and that is something you also have learnt and give them an example of how you are very careful about your personal details and why.

So just to summarise. In these conversations that you can have with your children, ask them. You know what? What can they see and is it age appropriate and is it safe? What are they sharing and who are they sharing with?

Chatting - so who are they talking to online and what are they talking about and what are they sharing?

Friending - who are they friends with online and what are they sharing with those friends? You know, all of these things you can ask, and also it's something to you for you to consider as well.

All the above need not be a big deal, just conversations that regularly occur. You could share your own online views as well. And it may be that you've added a new app recently. It may be telling them what social media you use and any issues that you've had with that. It may be about photos that you share and who you accept as friends, or who you don't accept.

It can be a two way thing, asking your child for permission to share a photo of them is a really good idea. It shows them how to be a good role model. Because we really should be asking permission. So it's also another good idea to have a list of rules that you've had a meeting and you've set up with your child and you know, supervision ground rules. So talk about that initially and build up some positive evidence with your child about how they can be trusted to have either a new app or a new phone or laptop or iPad, and whatever it may be. So work out what they can use, work out who owns it, who's paid for it, and what apps they are allowed to use. Also, when it comes to their password, will you know what the password is?

Rules in what can be downloaded and what they need to ask for, also need to be discussed. Rules on when and how parents will check the phone for apps and conversations or whether there's just going to be a dip sample that will happen every now and then.

Having the phone out of the bedroom overnight. Where is the phone charged overnight? Is the phone going to stay in the bedroom or not? All of these things need to be discussed and agreed. So the cut off time, how long before bed that phone and games are put away? I know I'm trying to give myself those rules as well, and it's not going well this week actually, so I need to try harder.

Where they can be online. So in their room with the door shut. Is that OK for you and your house or should they be in a communal area? You should be getting your kids to remove headphones on breaks and meals, etcetera. So these all of these things you can talk about and you can have a discussion and make decisions about between with you.