

**As we start this academic year and our children continue to navigate the increasingly complex online world, it is important our children understand the risks so we equip them with the skills to understand online safety. Any child can be vulnerable online.**

The key to help children and young people develop are:

- ✓ **How to evaluate what they see online** – children need to be able to assess and make judgements about what they see online, and not automatically assume that what they see is real or appropriate
- ✓ **How to recognise techniques used for persuasion** – children should understand the techniques that are often used to persuade or manipulate others
- ✓ **Online behaviour** – children should understand what acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour (in themselves and others) looks like. They should apply the same standards of behaviour and honesty on and offline, including respect for others.
- ✓ **How to identify online risks** – children should be able to identify possible online risks and make informed decisions about how to act
- ✓ **How and when to seek support** – children should understand safe ways in which to seek support if they are concerned or upset by something they have seen online, and also how to report online harm

You may have seen in the media the rise in free anonymous online chatrooms where users are randomly paired with strangers to chat via video call or instant messaging. The site '**Omegle**' is becoming more popular with children and young people. I would recommend not sharing the site name with your child as this will inevitably spark curiosity and increase traffic to the site. This platform does not need any account sign up, no age verification and no reporting or blocking features – users are unable to report inappropriate behaviour, and offending users can continue to use Omegle freely.

If your child receives explicit or inappropriate images, **do not** forward on to the school as it is an offence to distribute. We understand that you will want to provide evidence and will advise when you contact us. We may have to inform the police and keeping parents, children and staff protected is our key priority. It is important children and young people understand the dangers and consequences of sending information on social media platforms as chats and pictures are often saved/screen shots taken and distributed without knowledge and consent. Views that may offend and upset must never be shared as they can often cause upset and offence to children.

If a child or young person in your care has lost control of an image or video:

- [Submit a report](#) to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP).
- [Contact IWF](#) to have the image or video removed where possible online.

Attached are parent factsheets which provide information on popular platforms. Below you will find a list of useful websites to help support conversations at home.

### Resources for parents and carers:

- Internet Matters – a not-for-profit organisation set up to empower parents and carers to keep children safe in the digital world. Their support for parents includes a range of downloadable guides covering subjects such as transition to secondary school, Vlogging & livestreaming, online gaming and cyberbullying
- NSPCC - includes a range of resources to help parents keep children safe when they're using the internet, social networks, apps, games and more
- Parent Info - from CEOP and Parent Zone, Parent Info is a website for parents covering all of the issues amplified by the internet. It is a free service which helps schools engage parents with expert safety advice, endorsed by the National Crime Agency's CEOP command. This website provides expert information across a range of online harms
- Parent Zone - offers a range of resources for families, to help them meet the challenges of the digital age, including parent guides on the latest digital trends and platforms.

### Resources for pupils:

- BBC Own It - support for young people to take control of their online life, including help and advice, skills and inspiration on topics such as friendships and bullying, safety and self-esteem
- Childline – includes information for pupils on sexting, gaming, grooming, bullying, porn, relationships.

There are further resources for schools on Essex Schools Infolink / online safety, The Essex Safeguarding Children Board also has a lot of information about Online Safety (escb.co.uk) and parents can be directed to the website.