



E-safety and being safe – A guide for parents and students

This document covers the following issues:

- E-safety
- Mobile phone safety
- Bullying and cyber bullying
- Gang membership

The Internet has become part of our everyday lives and is now easier to access than ever before, but using the Internet can also have risks.

Children and young people are more at risk of exposure to inappropriate or criminal behaviour if they are unaware of the dangers.

These dangers can include:

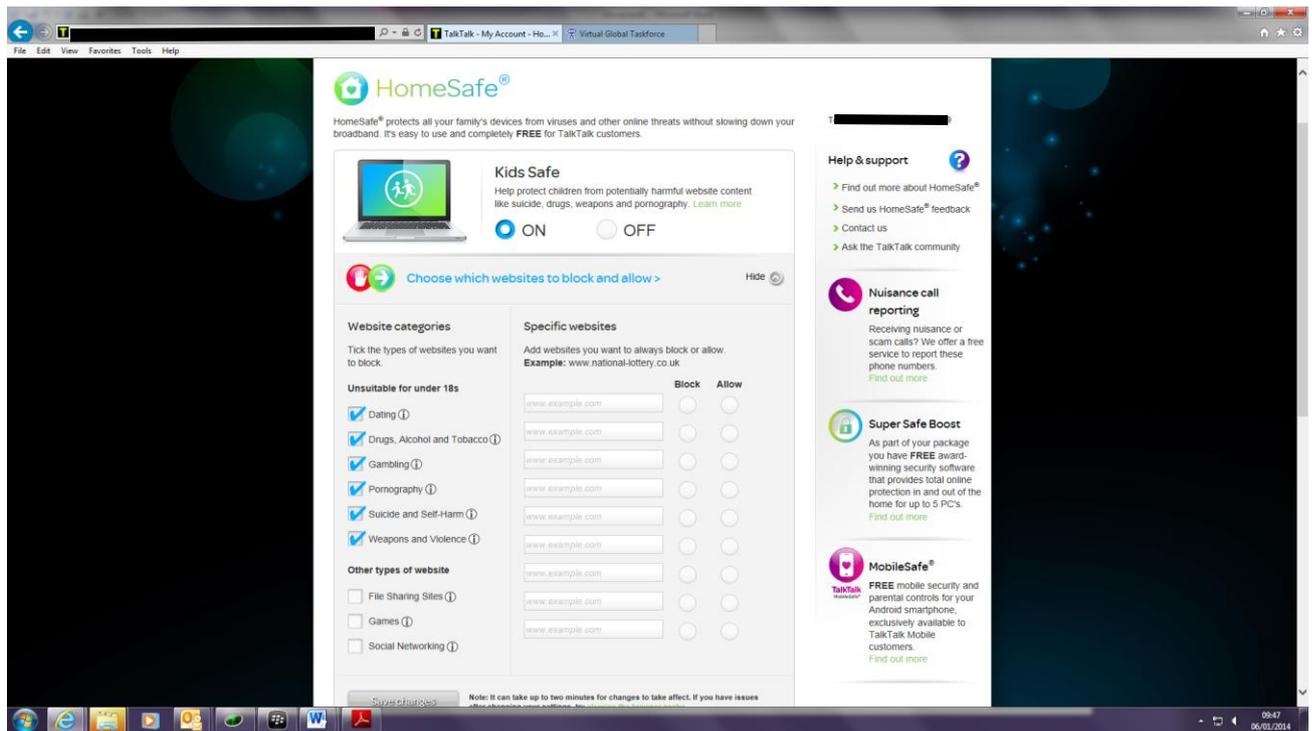
- viewing unsuitable content e.g. hate material, adult content, sites that endorse unhealthy behaviour
- giving out personal information
- arranging to meet an online 'friend'
- becoming involved in, or the victim of, bullying, identity theft, or making and sending indecent or illegal images
- spending too much time online which can effect concentration, education, sleep and health
- copying information from the Internet or buying work from other people to use as their own.

We have produced the attached leaflet as a guide for parents.

Controlling the use of the internet

All Internet Service Providers (ISP(TalkTalk, Virgin, AOL, btinternet etc.)) give the account holder the means to restrict access to particular sites.

The account settings will have a page very like this so you can restrict what your children can view.



To find the link to your provider's parental control video go to www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls.

Mobile Phone Safety

A third of 5 to 16 year olds are believed to have a mobile phone, so it's essential that parents/carers are aware of how they can be used safely.

Research conducted by YouGov for the Carphone Warehouse found that nearly half of parents said they are unaware that parental controls for mobile phones exist. With more than two in five of 8 to 15 year olds in the UK having accessed inappropriate content from their mobile phones.

Professor Tanya Byron has been advising the Government on child internet safety since 2007 and worked with the Carphone Warehouse to produce a guide for parents on mobile web safety.

Students are not permitted mobile phones in school. We have this rule as it removes a distraction to learning but also to improve the level of safety as students make their way to and from school. Although many phones are offered as free by phone companies as part of a contract, their value can be considerable and seen as desirable objects. A child recently brought a brand new iPhone 5s into school and unfortunately it was taken. We were able to recover the phone but not without considerable distress and concern. This phone has a retail value of £749. We have had some reports from the Police that a number of students from a neighbouring school have been mugged for their phones.

We urge you to consider carefully whether or not your child needs to be carrying an expensive smartphone to and from school. The school advice is that they do not. A cheaper alternative would suffice as a means of communication to and from school and be safer for your son/daughter. SIM cards can be transferred between phones so they can also use their smartphone safely at home. (for details you can look at <http://www.moneysupermarket.com/mobile-phones/pay-as-you-go/>; <http://www.moneysupermarket.com/mobile-phones/latest-mobile-phones/>;

<http://www.moneysupermarket.com/mobile-phones/latest-mobile-phones>. These sites have details of phones from as little as £3.75).

If your child has a mobile phone then it is essential that you register their phone on the website <https://www.immobilise.com/how-to-register-your-mobile-phone.html?stage=page&page=how-to-register-your-mobile-phone>. This means that if your child is unlucky and has their phone stolen then at least it can be locked and you will not be at risk of the huge phone bill that frequently follows the theft.

Mobile phone safety advice for children and young people:

- Only give your mobile number to your friends and people that you trust.
- Don't share it on social networking websites.
- Don't lend your phone to someone you don't know or trust, or put it in a place where other people could get hold of it.
- Lock your phone with a PIN code so if anyone steals your phone they won't be able to use it.
- If you have Bluetooth on your phone, keep this switched off when you are not using it.
- If your mobile phones uses GPS technology then make sure you only share your location with trusted friends and family
- Always check your privacy settings on applications you use on your mobile phone as sometimes these will be different to when you use websites online
- Always remember that once you've sent a text, picture or video (even to someone you know or trust) they can send it to other people without you knowing, so always think before you post
- If something happens on your mobile phone that makes you feel worried or uncomfortable then always speak to an adult you trust straight away.
- Register your phone on the website <https://www.immobilise.com/how-to-register-your-mobile-phone.html?stage=page&page=how-to-register-your-mobile-phone>.

Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

Bullying consists of four basic types of abuse – [emotional](#), [verbal](#), [physical](#), and cyber. It typically involves subtle methods of coercion such as intimidation. Cyber bullying includes:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages or emails, personally or anonymously
- Making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (e.g.: MySpace) or online diary (blog)
- Making or sharing derogatory or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or email (such as 'Happy Slapping' videos)

Physical Signs

Here are some physical signs to look out for:

- Injuries that a young person cannot, or will not, give a convincing explanation for (e.g. cuts and bruises, pain in arms and legs), particularly if they are often injured and if there seems to be a pattern of when the injuries happen.
- Torn or damaged clothing, (for example, clothing that is extremely dirty, blood-stained or graffitied) without a convincing explanation for how it happened.
- **General symptoms of ill health** due to stress or complaining of feeling too unwell to go to school. If your child is regularly complaining of feeling unwell (or is regularly sent home early from school due to illness) you should take this seriously, there may be an underlying reason they don't want to be at school.
- You may notice your child is **wetting the bed** at night. This can be a symptom of the trauma that bullying induces, particularly in younger children. It is important that you don't make a child feel even more ashamed by blaming or laughing at them for bedwetting.

Emotional Signs

Keep an eye out for the following emotional signs:

- **Mood swings and apparent changes in personality.** Young people who are bullied can react by becoming withdrawn or becoming aggressive themselves and can swing between having too much energy and too little.
- **Constant anxiety/nervousness.** Your child may always seem on edge and afraid.
- **Depression** – young people who are being bullied may seem depressed or they may tell you they are feeling unhappy or low.
- **Tearfulness** for no apparent reason, particularly if he/she gets tearful at the thought of going to meet with friends, going to school/PRU/youth group, or is regularly tearful after a particular activity.
- **Lack of confidence and negative self-image.** Young people who are being bullied often put themselves down and don't value their abilities. They may apologise for themselves a lot and automatically assume that they are about to be told off when you approach them.
- **Hostility and defensiveness.** Young people who are being bullied may complain of feeling picked on. The powerlessness and humiliation that people on the receiving end of bullying often feel can make them very angry and you may find that a child who is being bullied lashes out verbally and physically.

Behavioural Signs

Here are some behavioural signs to look out for:

- **Being generally withdrawn.**
- **Exclusion from group activities.** Young people will sometimes exclude themselves from a group because they are experiencing bullying within it or be excluded by a group as part of indirect bullying. This can also be seen as being less active or participating less in lessons, clubs or other group activities.
- **Eating disorders** and changes in eating habits. You may become worried about your child's eating habits - perhaps they have suddenly gained or lost a significant amount of weight.
- **Alcohol and/or drug use:** this can sometimes be a coping mechanism for young people being bullied or a result of peer pressure.
- **Self-harming.** Young people who are bullied are sometimes driven to self-harming. Be aware that small injuries, cuts, cigarette burns, etc. can be evidence of self-harming.
- Behaving in a **disruptive** and challenging way or refusing to co-operate with family members, peers or school staff.
- Behaving in a bullying and **abusive** way towards other people at home or at school.
- **Frequently "losing" possessions.**
- Often being **tired and sleepy** or complaining of sleeping badly, or seeming hyperactive with too much energy. Young people who are being bullied often show a lack of concentration.

What to do

If your child tells you who it is that is bullying them, you may be tempted to go and talk to this person or people directly or to speak to their parents/carers. Whilst you mean well, this isn't usually a good idea. Firstly, this may well make things worse for your child and give the people doing the bullying more to humiliate him/her with. Secondly, if you approach another child or young person and accuse him/her of bullying you may lay yourself open to accusations of threatening behaviour yourself. Wherever possible take action through your child's school, PRU, youth group, community safety team or your local police service.

The attached leaflet has been produced by BeatBullying to help you.

Gang membership

Edmonton is an area where gangs operate and parents are often concerned that their child might be asked to join a gang.

Studies have shown that children join gangs for lots of reasons that include:

- Feelings of low self-esteem
- Difficulties with relationships with parents and/or step-parents

Some of the signs that you should look out for:

- Your child getting into trouble with the Police- for theft from a car or a house or a person
- Your child is secretive about things
- Your child 'hanging out' at the park or other such places with groups that include older children and adults
- Your child acquiring high value goods (expensive trainers, mobile phones, bicycles, clothing) and money – and being reluctant to say where they have come from. (If this happens you should always try to find out if their story is true).
- Your child's behaviour changes in a way you can't explain.

What to do

Please contact your child's Head of Phase, a Deputy Head or the Headteacher. We will treat your contact as confidential and will not inform your child that you have made contact.

Finally

If you have any concerns about your child please contact your child's student manager. If you are concerned and it is the school holiday please send an email to the school via the website and we will respond as soon as possible.

Useful websites:

<http://www.getsafeonline.org/>

<http://www.beatbullying.org/>

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

<http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com/>

Attachments:

- **ECS e-safety policy**
- **Leaflet for parents and carers on ICT and e-Safety**
- **BeatBullying- How to approach the school**

January 2014