

# St Francis' Catholic Primary School



Station Road, Nailsea BS48 4PD  
Tel: 01275 855373 ~ Fax: 01275 794476  
Email: [stfrancis.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:stfrancis.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.st-francis.n-somerset.sch.uk](http://www.st-francis.n-somerset.sch.uk)



Headteacher: Ms Caroline Hostein

*Ensuring an excellent child-centred education within a Christ centred philosophy*

# E-Safety Newsletter

Term 4

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the fourth of our termly newsletters on E-Safety. At this stage of the year, you are hopefully developing a better understanding of your child's online activity. These newsletters aim to give you useful advice to guide your children towards appropriate and safe online behaviour.

The development of social networking sites and online communication means that it is easier than ever to keep in regular contact with friends and family, wherever they may be in the world. The ease with which we can now communicate with others has also meant that we can establish new and long-lasting friendships with people we are yet to meet in the real world. This is a wonderful way of creating friendships with those who share similar interests.

However, as we are all now aware, a minority of people on the internet are not always who they claim to be. This has paved the way for a process known as online grooming and children are usually the target. Grooming is a process used to prepare a child for abuse. The offender's aim when grooming will be to gain access to a child and build a relationship with that child. Social networking and online gaming sites make it easier for an offender to lie and gain one to one contact with a child.

**Inside:**  
**Grooming – Spotting the Signs and Protecting Your Child**

## **Spotting Signs of Grooming**

Grooming can take many different forms, from one off contact which may involve explicit advances, to a series of events over time. It may start with an adult scanning gaming sites/social networking sites to identify a vulnerable child and befriend them, perhaps by pretending to have common hobbies or interests to trick a child into trusting them.

Once a relationship is established, an offender may then introduce inappropriate themes into the conversation. For example, the child may be asked to share their own experiences, indecent images may be shared with them and they may even be asked for indecent images of themselves. Increasingly, children are being asked to perform indecent acts on webcam.

Different offenders have different approaches so this process may be very quick or may even take place gradually over a few months. Ultimately, an offender will often attempt to get a child to meet them in the real world in order to abuse them.

So what signs should you be looking for in your child's behaviour if you're concerned that someone may be grooming them?

### **1. *Heightened level of internet usage.***

Look out for an unhealthy or heightened level of internet usage. Has your child become secretive about who they are talking to and where they conduct their online conversations?

### **2. *Inappropriate behaviour.***

To your knowledge, has your child engaged in any indecent behaviour online or via text, chat or webcam? Have they got any new electronic devices or gifts that they may not have been able to obtain for themselves?

### **3. *Intention to meet online friends.***

Talk to your child about meeting their online friends offline. If they intend to meet any of these online friends, you need to set clear boundaries. Tell them why you are concerned for their safety and that they must take you or a trusted adult to the meeting with them.

KEEP YOUR KIDS  
**SAFE** Online



## **What can parents and carers do to protect their child online?**

Parents and carers need to be mindful that part of the fun of being online is communicating and often sites are designed for you to do so with people you don't know. Instead of banning your child from this kind of communication, teach them how to manage online relationships.

### ***1. Talk to your child about their online friends.***

Ask them to think carefully about who they chat and share information with. If they don't know them in the real world, they need to delete or limit what they share with them for example not sharing their photos or location.

If you are unsure where to start this conversation, consider the following:

- What sites they use
- The friends they have and how they know them
- How they communicate with these friends
- The type of information they share



### ***2. Talk to your child about online grooming.***

Explain how easy it can be to lie online and the reasons why an adult may wish to contact them. Approach this topic in the context of stranger danger. Strangers are people you or they don't know. In the online world there are strangers too and they must not talk privately with them or give out any personal information online.

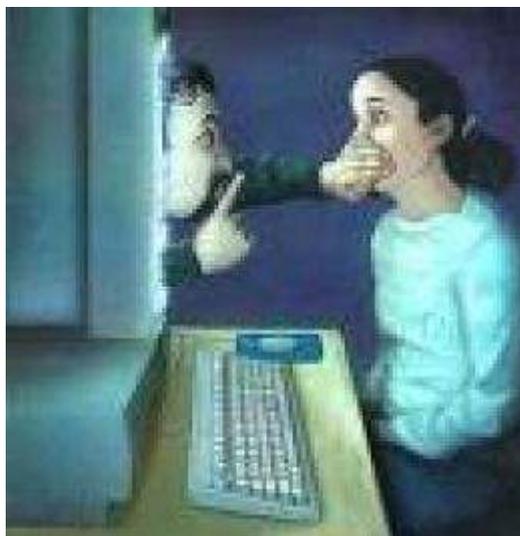


### ***3. Check that your child is using appropriate websites for social networking.***

Is your child aware of minimum age limits for websites? Might they have lied in order to create a profile? Many of the most popular websites have a minimum age limit e.g. you must be 13 to have a Facebook account. Check that your child is using child-friendly websites and talk to them about why age limits are in place.

#### **4. Let them know you are always there for support.**

Tell your child that you understand how easy it can be to get into difficulties online. Get them to talk to you if anyone makes inappropriate comments and ensure that they know that, no matter what's happened, you are there to help.



#### **5. Learn how to report any inappropriate contact made to your child online.**

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre is a police led, child protection agency which specialises in tackling abuse online and offline. If someone has acted inappropriately towards your child, you must report it to ClickCEOP at [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)



As always, if there is anything we can help with in school or any behaviour that you feel we should know about, please don't hesitate to speak to a member of staff. For further help and guidance on dealing with online grooming, please visit:

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)

Yours sincerely,

S Groves