

The Shuttle

25/04/25

WELCOME BACK TO THE SUMMER TERM!

The P.T.F.A Egg Scramble was a great success! The FUN-raisers did a brilliant job running the event! Thank you to Caroline for working so hard to organise the event!



Hopefully we'll be seeing some really nice weather now the summer term is upon us! Please ensure your child brings a water bottle to school (labelled with their name).
MANY THANKS

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MAKING FRIENDS ONLINE

In today's digital world, it's increasingly common for children to form friendships with people they've never met in person. While online connections can offer children a sense of belonging, they also carry significant risks. Around 19% of children aged 10 to 15 in England and Wales have chatted online with someone they've never met face to face. This guide offers expert advice for parents and educators on helping children navigate online friendships safely.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- ONLINE GROOMING THREATS**
Predators can use games, chat apps or social media platforms to build relationships with children, often posing as a peer. A recent study by the National Crime Agency revealed nearly 34,000 online grooming offences - an 80% increase in just five years.
- EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**
Children may encounter inappropriate or explicit material while browsing social media, gaming or streaming services. This is exacerbated in a world where 40% of children aged 10 to 17 had seen explicit content online in the last 12 months, with 10% reporting they'd seen explicit content or sexual images.
- COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY**
Meeting an online friend in real life may place a child in serious danger. From being taken to a secret location, to being sexually abused, children's personal information can be used to track their location, identify their school and contact their family. Around 10% of children have been contacted by someone they met online, with 5% reporting they've met someone they met online in person.
- PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS**
Online harassment - such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content - can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Catfishing' games, which allow users to create false online identities, can be particularly harmful, leading to heartbreak and self-harm.
- LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS**
Children exposed to harmful online content may experience anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or even be groomed as a sex offender. Children who are sexually abused online may also experience long-term mental health issues, including the long-term effects of trauma, highlighting the long-term nature of online risks.
- PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS**
Children and young people often share personal information - such as their name, age, address, school, and contact details - in online spaces. This data can be used to identify and locate them, even if they've deleted the information.
- TEACH SAFE ONLINE HABITS**
Help children understand how to use privacy settings, protect their personal information, spot fake profiles, and report anything suspicious or concerning. The personal habits a young person has today can have a lasting impact on their future.
- ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS**
Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.
- KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN**
Let children know they can talk to you about their online life. Avoid reacting with anger or judgement, as this may prevent them from opening up in the future. A child who feels embarrassed to discuss problems before they escalate.
- USE PARENTAL CONTROLS**
Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, block inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW

Advice for Parents & Educators

Meet Our Expert
Gabriella Basso is a safeguarding consultant with over 20 years' experience in supporting children, families, and adults across education, local authority, and mental health settings - both in the UK (including at Parliamentary level) and internationally.

#WakeUpWednesday The National College

Do you have any plant cuttings, or small bedding plants you would be happy to donate to the school? The Up-Cycle Park could do with a splash of colour!
MANY THANKS



Friday's cheesy yet
Wise Words Of Wisdom

THERE
IS NO SUCH THING AS
A CHILD WHO HATES
TO READ; THERE ARE ONLY CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT FOUND
THE RIGHT BOOK.
-FRANK SERAFINI

Please ensure your child does not play on the large climbing frame before or after school.
Many thanks