



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN TERM 2025

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Mr Holley:
Designated Safeguard Lead

The purpose of this newsletter is to give you some local context and to highlight the measures Trinity has taken to be as proactive as possible in ensuring that we have given the young people in our care the skills and knowledge to safeguard themselves in the modern world.

PSHE IN THE AUTUMN TERM

Our Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education programme here at Trinity plays a crucial role in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, whilst achieving their full potential. This comprehensive programme is delivered through our Tutor Programme, PSHE lessons and PSHE focus days.

This term, our PSHE programme has provided students with guidance on a wide range of important topics to support their personal development and safety. Students have explored issues such as recognising and preventing discrimination, understanding the impact of bullying (including cyberbullying), and maintaining their safety online and offline. We have addressed the risks associated with addictive substances such as smoking, vaping, alcohol, and illegal drugs, along with the dangers of psychoactive substances, nitrous oxide and energy drinks. Lessons have also focused on substance misuse, the legal and health consequences of drugs and strategies for making safe and informed choices.

In addition, students have learned about critical safety issues, including emergency first aid, knife crime, and the risks associated with county lines exploitation. Through these topics and discussions, we continue to empower students with the confidence, resilience and awareness they need to make positive decisions now and in the future.

Furthermore, we also launched our new Belonging Behaviours Programme this term. This is a whole school initiative designed to help every student develop the right habits, skills and attitudes needed to thrive both in and beyond the classroom. Weekly tutor sessions have focused on areas such as Aspirations and Ownership, Participation and Engagement, Digital Responsibility and Celebrating Success. This has encouraged students to reflect on their goals and take greater responsibility for their progress.



ATTENDANCE

Attendance is currently a national problem, with the average attendance of a secondary school student as low as 92.8% at the end of November. The average attendance of a Trinity student was 92.2% for the same period. Any day off will impact a student's overall attendance, with data proving that students who have an average attendance of over 90% achieving higher grades at GCSE level. The same paper also stated that 'missing just 10 days of year 11 reduced the likelihood of achieving a grade 5 in English and Maths by around 50%.'

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c96d7dd0fba2f1334cf2ed/The link between attendance and attainment in an assessment year - March 2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c96d7dd0fba2f1334cf2ed/The_link_between_attendance_and_attainment_in_an_assessment_year_-_March_2025.pdf)

DEALING WITH EXAM STRESS

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/>



SLEEP

Teenagers can potentially become 'nocturnal' over Christmas as they stay up playing games or scrolling on their phones. Sleep is really important for the developing human brain. Teenagers need sleep and can get into some bad habits over the course of the Christmas holiday which means they then find it incredible hard to come back into school. This can then lead to some errors of judgement in terms of behaviour and safeguarding incidents as well as impact negatively on attendance and, therefore, attainment.

How to establish a good sleep routine:

1. Have a fixed routine, even at weekends and holidays
2. Avoid devices at least an hour before bed
3. Talk about or write down worries
4. Control the bedroom environment
5. Eat the right food and regularly exercise

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/how-to-fall-asleep-faster-and-sleep-better/>

PHONE USE

A new phone may be seen as the perfect gift for a teenager. However, there are growing concerns around the amount of hours young people are spending on their phones every day and how this is having a huge impact on their mental health (<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/uk/health/mental-health/a62595335/the-state-of-modern-girlhood-report/>).

How to establish good phone routines:

1. Buy an old-fashioned radio alarm clock so they don't need a phone in their room
2. Turn off notifications on devices
3. Set up time limits on devices
4. Wear a watch so you are not reliant on your phone for the time
5. No devices an hour before bed – read a book instead!
6. Set an example – Christmas is a time to reconnect after the pressures of busy lives, spend the time talking to each other rather than on your devices.

MENTAL HEALTH

More than ever, looking after our mental health is crucial. If you are worried about your child's low mood during the Christmas period and/or self-harm, please see the link for some ways of helping them to cope.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/ways-help-avoid-self-harm/>

The NHS also has some good hints and tips about how we can all look after our mental health

(https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/your-mind-plan-quiz/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=CjwKCAiAksyNBhAPEiwAIDBelBS6sW6CfudxkXE3VeNBScWWCUL4SvUk7kajiU0dcShhkR3FTiz0FBoCf6sQAvD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds).

The NSPCC also has a useful 'Parenting Quiz' with some advice and guidance on online well-being:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-wellbeing/quiz/>

A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE TRINITY PASTORAL TEAM!

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 and gain their trust. This may quickly develop into grooming or exploitation. Between April 2017 and March 2023, UK police recorded nearly 34,000 online grooming offences – an 82% increase in just five years.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Children may encounter distressing or explicit material while interacting with online contacts – especially via TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat. This is evidenced in a survey by the Children's Commissioner for England, which found that 45% of children aged 8 to 17 had seen content online that made them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset.

PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS

Children and young people often overshare personal details – such as where they live or go to school – without understanding the consequences. In fact, 4.4% of 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK have met up in real life with someone they'd only spoken to online.

COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY

Meeting an online 'friend' in real life risks placing a child in serious danger. From abduction to coercion, the consequences can be devastating. Reports of children being harmed after such meetings are becoming increasingly common in the UK, highlighting the need for safeguarding intervention.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Online harm – such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content – can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Sextortion' gangs, who threaten to release sexual information about a person unless they pay them money, have reportedly targeted children as young as 11, leaving them traumatised and ashamed.

LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Children exposed to harmful online relationships early on may develop unhealthy beliefs about relationships, consent, or self-worth. In a recent case, a 26-year-old posed as a girl on Snapchat to befriend children aged 10 to 16, manipulating them into sexual activity and causing profound emotional distress. One 12-year-old tragically died by suicide, highlighting the long-term psychological harm online friendships with strangers can cause.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW

Advice for Parents & Educators

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, like pressure tactics. Encourage them to think critically about what they share – and whom they're talking to.

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 listened to is more likely to disclose problems before they escalate.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS

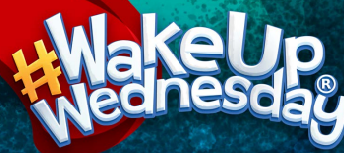
Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, filter out inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with over 30 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.



The National College

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TROLLING

The term "Trolling" refers to sending hurtful or provocative comments – often done anonymously online – to provoke a reaction or cause emotional distress. Anonymity can embolden people into saying things they wouldn't dare say in person. Euro 2024 and other tournaments tend to put an emphasis on this, with the abuse of both players and fans often increasing during such events.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ESCALATION

Many trolls begin with silly, banal comments before moving on to a broader pattern of offensive messages and posts. They can also turn their attention very quickly to a new target if they grow bored with an existing one, which makes engaging with one fruitless at best – and potentially dangerous at worst.

HIDING BEHIND A SCREEN

Because trolls tend to use anonymous profiles, they enjoy a lack of accountability. This also means they'll often have multiple profiles, potentially switching between them regularly or posting across several of them at the same time, making a target feel as though there's no escape. After all, once you block one account, what's to stop them reappearing elsewhere?

24/7 CONTACT

The internet has given us the ability to remain in contact at any time, from almost anywhere in the world. A troll having the ability to reach you whenever they want can leave you feeling like their abuse is unavoidable. While they don't see you in real life, they can message you at any time, reach out to your peers online and even try to discover your personal information to scare you.

HATE SPEECH

Sadly, many trolls resort to spewing racial slurs, homophobic attacks and awful stereotypes, as these often stand the best chance of causing emotional harm. This can add a hefty degree of weight to their attacks, moving from what might charitably be described as "teasing" into a genuine hate crime. After Euro 2020, three England footballers were racially abused, resulting in several prison sentences.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

It's not uncommon for the victims of trolls to shut down their accounts, disappear from public life, and try to stay out of the crosshairs for a time – with some even leaving social media forever. This can have a severe impact on children and young people's connections to friends and the world at large, and may not even actually stop the troll. The victims' families, for example, may have online profiles that trolls can still access.

NORMALISATION OF TROLLING

It is, regrettably, inevitable that some people will go too far in their criticisms or comments, both online and in the real world. This can lead to many people seeing trolls and their abuse as part and parcel of social media – an inherent risk of interacting with others online. This doesn't mean, however, that it should be considered "normal" or even tolerated.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media platforms (where most trolling tends to happen) aren't always helpful when responding to abusive behaviour, parents can set up screen time limits, so children only get to use certain apps at certain times. There's always the potential for trolling to occur anyway – such as friends showing screenshots to one another – but this would minimise the likelihood of children seeing it.

DON'T ENGAGE WITH ABUSE

A well-known adage on social media is "don't feed the trolls". Fundamentally, if a child identifies a potential troll online, it's best not to engage with that individual directly. Instead, consider setting up a log to gather evidence for reporting them later on, including screenshots and quotes where possible.

ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

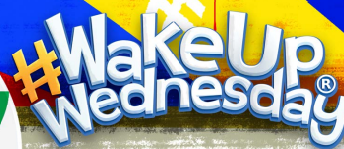
While every professional athlete aspires to maintain high standards, it's important to separate the player from the person. A player's performance doesn't make them worthy of abuse, and that can often be forgotten by younger children who simply see the colour of the shirt without considering the person wearing it. For all the rivalries between teams, it's essential children understand that players are still human beings, with families and lives outside of sport.

BLOCK AND REPORT

While anonymous accounts make it difficult to block trolls permanently – or even for very long – it's still good practice to help children learn to control who can engage with them online. It's not worth "feeding the trolls", and it's more helpful to block them, report them, and try to move on. Blocking and reporting is an anonymous process, too, so there'll be no indication of who specifically blew the whistle.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A long-time fan of Arsenal, he's a parent who understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer whose work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/online-trolling



In today's digitally connected world, children and adults are constantly presented with new ways to engage, react and contribute. We're sociable beings; it's a natural human instinct, especially amongst younger audiences, to want to belong and join in. Viral Challenges (as they're often known) draw on these emotions and, as the name suggests, spread and gather pace very rapidly. New challenges are constantly emerging and evolving. They're often completely innocent, raising awareness of worthy causes or simply providing amusement. However, they can have much more sinister undertones, putting children at risk of physical harm or, in extreme cases, fatal injury.



What parents need to know about ONLINE CHALLENGES

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

As well as having the potential to cause actual physical harm, some challenges can be extremely upsetting for children. Many are created with the sole purpose of instilling fear in an individual in order to coerce them into doing things that could have a long-term emotional effect on them.

VARYING LEVELS OF RISK

As a parent or carer, it's important to take a balanced view and understand that not everything online has the potential to do harm. Mass-following and interaction can be a force for good. For example, the Ice Bucket Challenge, which swept the nation, set out to raise money and awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). At its height, over 28 million people uploaded, commented on, or liked Ice Bucket Challenge related posts on Facebook. It's equally important to be aware though that online challenges often have a darker side. Malicious trends and challenges can expose children to dangerous or even life-threatening situations, so it's critical that parents and carers are aware of the latest risks and understand what steps to take to mitigate them.

'FOMO' - FEAR OF MISSING OUT

The 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) is a strong emotional characteristic, particularly displayed in young people. The nature of viral challenges encourages children to explore and push boundaries. They tap into FOMO by feeding on a child's natural desire to join in, be accepted and share experiences with their friends and the wider online community. A recent study also found that FOMO is one of the greatest causes of Social Media addiction.



STRIVING FOR LIKES

In a major study by the Children's Commissioner, it was found that children as young as ten years old are reliant on 'Likes' for their sense of self-worth. A major concern around viral challenges is not knowing how far children will go to earn 'Likes'. Couple this growing appetite for acceptance with commonplace peer pressure and the potential problem is compounded. The result is that when young people are drawn into online challenges, because it is what all their friends are doing, saying 'no' can seem like a very hard thing to do.

"The coolest person at school will start a trend and then everyone copies her"
Merran, 12, Year 7

"If I got 150 likes, I'd be like that's pretty cool it means they like you"
Aaron, 11, Year 7



National Online Safety®



Top Tips for Parents



COMMUNICATION & MONITORING

It's important to talk to your child regularly and monitor their online activities. Encouraging honesty and openness, will give you a much clearer viewpoint of how your child is interacting online and what concerns they have. Create an atmosphere of trust. Ensure they feel they can confide in you or another trusted adult regarding anything they may have seen or experienced online that's upset them.

THINK BEFORE ACTING

As with most concerns in life, let common sense prevail when it comes to Viral Challenges. Young people need the freedom and space to explore and going in all guns blazing may well be counter-effective. Address the importance of safety and wellbeing, both online and offline, by getting the facts and understanding the risks. Start a discussion about the Online Challenges that may have captured your child's interest, gauge their likely involvement and explain the importance of thinking and acting independently when it comes to participating.

SETTING UP EFFECTIVE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all online activity, ensuring you have effective parental controls set up on all devices will help filter and restrict the dangerous or inappropriate content you don't wish your child to access. Additional measures for protecting your child include checking the privacy settings on your child's devices, monitoring their friends list, ensuring their personal information is safe and secure and keeping a watchful eye on the content they're sharing.

REPORTING & BLOCKING

Parental controls can only go so far in blocking potentially harmful content. A rise in the decoding of social media algorithms, has led to age inappropriate content increasingly appearing on platforms and apps used by children. Where possible, you should regularly monitor what your child sees online and flag/report any content which is inappropriate or dangerous. You should take the time to talk to your child, define what you consider to be appropriate content and show them how to report and block users/accounts themselves.

VALIDATE SOURCES

Not everything is as it seems. Some people create fake content that's designed to 'shock' in order to encourage rapid sharing. If your child has seen something online that has triggered concern you should encourage them to, check its origin, verify that it came from a credible source and check the comments made for any clues to its validity.

FACING REALITY

Trends and Viral Challenges can be tempting for children to take part in; no matter how dangerous or scary they may seem. As a parent or carer it can be difficult to keep pace with the very latest Online Challenges emerging. In recent months these have included potentially dangerous crazes, including the 'Bird Box' challenge, which was inspired by Netflix's popular film and encourages followers to upload videos of themselves attempting everyday tasks while blindfolded. The best advice is to keep talking to your child. Show that your taking an interest and not just prying. Ensure your child knows they don't have to get involved and if they're unsure, let them know you're there to talk before they consider participating. Children often need reassurance that not everything they see online is real. If your child has viewed distressing or frightening content it's important to talk to them about their experience, support them and, if required, help them find additional support.

SOURCES:
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/fake-news-twitter-spreads-further-faster-real-stories-retweets-political-a8247491.html> | <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2209452/Teen-dies-copying-pass-game-time-YouTube.html>
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6307331/Boy-11-dies-YouTube-choking-challenge-mother-warns-parents-son-strangled-himself.html> | Children's Commissioner Life in 'likes' report - RSPH - Status of mind report
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29013707> | <https://www.independentie.life/health-wellbeing/fear-of-missing-out-fomo-one-of-greatest-causes-of-social-media-addiction-study-finds-36975296.html>
<http://www.ttp.co.uk/news/children-as-young-as-eight-addicted-to-social-media-likes/>

Personal Excellence and Collective Responsibility

Trinity School Safeguarding Team



Ms T Weatherley

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mr D Holley

Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mr B Hanlon

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Additional Staff Support



Mr G Ruddle

Head of Dragon House
Head of Transition



Miss A Dickinson

Head of Griffin House



Mr E Collett

Head of Phoenix House



Miss L Pacheco

Head of Pegasus House



Mrs L Moore

Wellbeing Lead
Acting Head of Pegasus House



Mrs S Kemp

SENDCo



Mrs J Thomas

Attendance officer
Educational Welfare Officer

Additional Services



Child line

www.childline.org / 0800 1111



NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk / 0808 800 500



Child Exploitation & Online Protection Command

www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Student Support



Anti-bullying Ambassadors



Trinity Peer Mentors



Student Voice



Trinity Head Students



Youth Health Champions

"Student achievement is at the heart of all we do"