

Parents and Carers Safeguarding Newsletter

July 2023

Welcome to our Summer Term Newsletter. The aim is to share current advice which we think will be useful to you. The worrying and challenging rise in vaping amongst young people is of particular concern and so we have included information on this topic.

I hope that you have a good summer break.

Darryl Carpenter

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Keeping Safe Online



Over the summer break CEOP will be launching #CEOPSummerChallenge, six weeks of thematic challenges for parents and carers to complete with their children. The challenge aims to support parents and carers to talk regularly with their children about being online and how to be safer. Each week parents and carers can choose one challenge (or more if they wish!) from four options per age group, for ages 4 to 11 and 11+. The topics for the six weeks will cover:

Week 1: online security

Week 2: a balanced view of being online

Week 3: sharing photos online

Week 4: socialising online

Week 5: online videos

Week 6: online gaming

#CEOPSummerChallenge starts week commencing 24th July, with challenges posted every Monday and a reminder every Wednesday.

You can support this campaign by getting parents and carers to follow the challenge on our Facebook (ClickCEOP), we will also be sharing the challenge with our professional audience on Twitter (@CEOPUK), to be shared with parent and carer networks. Parents and carers can also get involved by sharing across social media and following the #CEOPSummerChallenge.

Additionally, we also have the [Home Safety Activities](#) on the parents and carers website. These are a range of activity sheets and films which parents and carers can work through with their child about a range of online safety topics.



The Somerset team have introduced use of tellmi. It's a safe, anonymous app where you can talk about absolutely anything, giving you the tools to manage your own mental health and support others. From anxiety to autism, dating to depression, or self-harm to self-esteem, sharing your experiences with their awesome community helps you to feel better. Their moderators check everything to keep you safe and their in-house counsellors are always on hand if you need extra support.

This is for everyone, including people with special educational needs and disabilities. Please watch this short video [here](#).

[More information](#)

The app can be downloaded at Google Play or the App Store. To find out more about Tellmi, visit www.tellmi.help

Vaping

Vaping seems to be everywhere nowadays. It seems you can't go to a petrol station or walk through a shopping centre without seeing colourful advertising or catching a sickly-sweet scent lingering in the air. While vapes (also known as electronic cigarettes or 'e-cigarettes') are meant to be used as a 'quit tool' for smokers rather than a new method for non-smokers, one trend has been slowly on the rise in the last few years – youth vaping.

This may seem surprising, but we have received reports across our Safer Schools community that children as young as 8 years old have been found vaping at schools across the UK. It also follows worries from healthcare officials that [youth vaping is gradually on the rise in the UK](#), despite the fact that selling vapes to under 18s is illegal. While there are many factors that play into this rise, healthcare officials have warned that [social media might be a big influence](#) in young people deciding to vape.

Our online safety and safeguarding community experts have taken a deeper look at youth vaping to provide potential risks and helpful tips for parents, carers, and professionals that will help them better understand this issue and how it might impact the young people in their care.

Top Tips

If a child or young person in your care is vaping and you are concerned, speak to a healthcare professional.

- **Be observant.** Keep an eye on a young person's behaviour. It's also helpful to know who they are friends with and if vaping is a regular part of hang outs.
- **Don't panic.** If you discover a young person in your care is vaping or has tried it, it is important to approach them calmly and avoid confrontation.
- **Ask questions.** Make sure you get your facts straight by asking questions, such as, "Have you ever tried vaping?" or "What do you like about vaping?"
- **Listen to them.** Rather than reacting in anger or disappointment, put your focus on them and give them space to open up to you without judgement.
- **Talk it out.** Sharing useful facts and resources with them might help you explain your concerns, while allowing you to talk about negative influences.

- **Use safety settings.** Make sure the correct privacy and safety settings are working on your young person's online accounts, including safety filters.
- **Lead by example.** It's important to outline the difference between those who vape to help quit smoking and those who vape recreationally – including yourself and any other adults they may know. If you vape, do what you can to avoid vaping in front of the young person, and make sure to answer any questions they may have.

Further Resources and Support

<https://ash.org.uk/resources>

<https://ash.org.uk/uploads/Use-of-e-cigarettes-among-young-people-in-Great-Britain-2022.pdf>

Advice for Parents and Carers

Games Consoles



How to start a conversation with your child about gaming safely:

Why do you want to get a games console?

Whilst deciding if it is time for your child to have their first games console can be a great opportunity to find out what your child expects to use it for. This could be for playing online, playing with siblings or friends, or for playing by themselves.

What do you like about your games console? What is your favourite game?

If your child already has a games console, you can ask them about their favourite things to play, you can ask them to teach you to play the game and explore the ways to report and block players or content whilst playing together.

What game do you really want to play?

When talking about games your child wants to play, you can take a moment to discuss age ratings and what different content is available on different games. This can be a good opportunity to discuss your expectations around the games that your child can and can't play.

How do young people your age use their games console?

Learning about the way that young people are using devices and games can give you an insight into why your child may want a new game or console.

How can we as a family help you to manage the time you spend gaming? Can we do anything to help you use the games console more safely?

Finding out how your child wants to be supported whilst online is a great way to open up wider conversations around online safety and the issues young people may face whilst gaming. You can also look at establishing a [family agreement](#) to manage your families time online.

What would you do if something worrying or upsetting happened on your games console?

Tell your child what they should do if something goes wrong while using it. This could be to close the screen and tell an adult. See below for conversation starter ideas.

What can I do if something goes wrong?

Reassure your child they have done the right thing by telling you and that you are there to listen and help. Try to remain calm and non-judgemental, to help your child feel comfortable in telling you how the issue happened.

Work with your child to report or block any unacceptable behaviour or other users. Contact your child's school for further support, particularly if it involves cyberbullying between classmates or inappropriate contact from an adult. If you suspect that your child is or has been the subject of inappropriate sexual contact by another person (grooming), report this to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.police.uk.

If your child has accessed inappropriate content, you can report this to the site or service it appeared on. Find out how to do this on the [Childnet website](#).

Explore the settings to see if you can limit the risk of it happening again.

For help on specific problems, see the following hot topics on [gaming](#), [screen time](#), [cyberbullying](#), [online grooming](#) and [digital wellbeing](#).



Please make sure you follow the Sexey's wellbeing twitter page @SexeysWellbeing. Rachel Guest regularly shares useful information that can be supportive for you and your family.



Young Somerset's Wellbeing Service – This service provides free wellbeing support for young people experiencing low level mental health needs.

For more information visit: <https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk/>



Somerset Council Public Health are working with Harmless to offer

Children and Young People Self Harm Awareness Training

Course length: 90 minutes

Target Audience

Somerset Parent's, Carers and Family Members

Learning Outcomes

- Understand self harm and who it can affect
- Identify reasons that can lead a young person to self harm
- Recognise the stigma surrounding self harm and the impact this can have
- Understand the wider impact self harm has on friends and family, with a focus on parents/carers
- Raise confidence in responding to/supporting young people who self harm
- Establish how to maintain your own self care and wellbeing
- Identify a range of local and national resources/services/information to support young people who self harm
- Understand the importance of recovery
- Q & A

Visit www.cypsomersethealth.org for training details and registration

If there are any specific areas you would like to have further information on that are not covered here please email Helen Snow Safeguarding Administrator – hsnow@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk who will forward further information and resources to you.