



SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our third schools newsletter.

Hopefully our newsletters are doing the rounds and that more and more parents/carers are reading the useful information that we are carefully selecting. If anyone for any reason did not receive our previous newsletters, then please email Aylesburysaferschools@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk and we will be happy to forward you a copy.

Like in our previous Newsletters we would like to remind parents/carers that you should report incidents directly to the school who take primacy in investigating. If any incident is reported to the police we record it, notify the school, liaise with the investigating teacher, and deal with the incident under SSP guidance. This approach is restorative and our priority is to educate / safeguard, not criminalise

Online Grooming

Online grooming is the term used to describe people befriending children online in order to take advantage of them for their own gain. This is often associated and believed to be for a sexual purpose. It is important that you know that young people are also groomed online for other reasons as criminal's now look to exploit young people in a life of crime.

WHERE DOES THIS HAPPEN?

People who want to groom children will use any sites and services which are popular with young people. They can become very active in online games or communities popular with children.

On social media they might send out multiple 'friend requests' at random in the hope that young people will accept them. They also try to identify young people who might be particularly vulnerable by looking at the things they post.

In games and chatrooms they will try to start conversations with young people and then ask them to chat privately, perhaps on social media or on a mobile chat app.

You should assume that if a site or app is popular with young people then people with a sexual interest in children will try to use it to communicate with them. This doesn't mean you should panic or not let your children use them, simply that they should be aware that there can be risks on any platform they are using.

What should you tell your child?

It's important to ensure that your children are aware of the risks posed by people with a sexual interest in children online. Your children should know that they should be wary of people they talk to online, not share too much personal information and to be aware of how they appear in their online profiles. It's also important that your child knows that they can talk to you if anything is bothering them and that you will be supportive. Remember both boys and girls can be groomed.

SEXTING

'Sexting' is an amalgamation of the words sex and texting

The act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, either via text, mobile phone, email or internet messaging is what we refer to as sexting

So this includes, naked pictures, underwear shots, other sexual texts, images or video

Young people may also call it: "Cybersex", "Sending a nudie", "dick pics", "booty pics", "dirties", "pic for pic2 – the list is endless

Sexting and the Law

In the UK the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16. However, it is an offence to make, distribute, possess or show any indecent images of anyone aged under 18, even if the content was created with the consent of that young person.

Sexting is defined as taking a sexually explicit or partially nude image of yourself and sending it on to someone else, usually a boyfriend or girlfriend but sometimes potentially done as a dare. For anyone under the age of 18 the act of sexting is illegal under the Protection of Children Act 1978. This states that if a young person under the age of 18 takes an image of this nature of themselves then the law has been broken as they have created an indecent image of a child, even though the image is of themselves. By sending this content on to another person, they have distributed an indecent image of a child. By receiving content of this kind and having it on your device then someone would be in possession of an indecent image of a child.

WHAT IS INDECENT

There's no legal definition of 'indecent' but basically if it's naked, a topless girl, contains genitals or sex acts, including masturbation, then it will be indecent.

- Tell your child what can happen when things go wrong. Don't accuse your child of "sexting", but do explain the dangers.
- You may find it easiest to use real-life examples, such as television programmes or news stories, to help you explain the risks. Ask them if they would want something private shown to the world. Explain that photos are easy to forward and can be copied.
- Talk about whether your child thinks that the person who sends a request is likely to be asking other people to do the same.

Useful links: www.barnardos.org.uk/rusafebucks - support for vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation. www.thinkUknow.co.uk - CEOPs (Child Exploitation & Online Protection) education programme aiming to educate and protect children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation