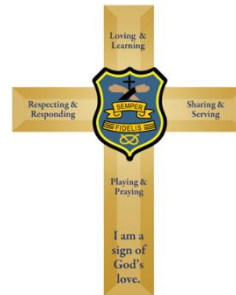


Online Safety at St Francis



The Online Safety Act 2023

The Online Safety Act is a new law, which introduces measures to make sure that children are protected online. It will help to make social media platforms and other online companies responsible for ensuring children are protected on their platforms and are not exposed to harmful content whilst online.

The Online Safety Bill will be implemented over the next three years, with some measures – including age verification for pornography – within 18 months.

Charities such as Barnardo's and the NSPCC have played a role in making sure that the Act is fit for purpose in protecting children from online harms and ensuring that children are able to enjoy being online safely.

What exactly will the Online Safety Act do to protect children?

The new measures this law sets out include:

1. introducing age assurance and age verification to ensure that children cannot access services not designed for them. This includes pornography sites and social media companies having to check you are 18 or over before you can access pornographic material, and social media sites having to prevent children accessing them before the minimum age (often 13 years old);
2. placing a duty on the largest social media platforms to publish risk assessments, so that the risks and dangers posed to children on the platform are transparent;
3. placing a duty on social media sites to take action to prevent illegal and harmful content from being shared on their platform and making sure it is quickly removed. This includes content like videos and images of child sexual abuse and exploitation;
4. introducing new criminal offences, so that things like encouraging others to self-harm; 'trolling' or purposefully targeting people who have epilepsy with harmful flashing content and sending people unsolicited nude images, sometimes called 'cyberflashing', will all be a crime;
5. giving bereaved parents the right to access their child's data;
6. providing parents and children with accessible ways to report any problems online if they do arise;
7. introducing punishment and sanctions for social media platforms that do not follow the Online Safety Act.

Jess Edwards from Banardos explains,

"As well as providing protection for children, the Act will also give adult users the option to opt out of seeing harmful material on the largest platforms."

"Social media platforms will also be under a legal duty to enforce their terms and conditions – the list of promises that they make to users when they sign up."

Useful Acronyms & Vocabulary

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

SPOC: Single Point of Contact (PREVENT) - responsible for preventing children being impacted by extremism

PREVENT: Part of the Governments Counter Terrorism Strategy to stop people being drawn into extremism

LADO: Local Authority Designated Officer—the person who deals with position of trust safeguarding issues

CEOP: Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Centre

Who's Who



Mrs Wright DSL & SPOC



Mrs Richards Deputy DSL



Mr Turner Deputy DSL & DSPOC



Useful Acronyms & Vocabulary about Safeguarding

KCSIE: Keeping Children Safe in Education (available on the school web pages)

CPOMS – Child Protection Online Monitoring and Safeguarding system (safeguarding and child protection software for schools)

EH: Early Help

CIN: Child in Need

CP: Child Protection

SEND: Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

NSPCC: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

National Online Safety: Online training and support for families about all things online

Safeguarding Information at St Francis

We have prepared key information on the school website for parents to access important documents and contact details.

Please have a look at: <https://www.st-francis-p.walsall.sch.uk/safeguarding.htm>

What are the next steps for the Online Safety Act?

Now that the Online Safety Act has become law, Ofcom has been given the power to implement and regulate the Act. Charities for children will continue to work closely with Ofcom, to make sure that the implementation and regulation of the Act best protects children. They know that technology – and risks to children – emerge all the time, and will work with the Government to make sure that the law stays ahead of the risks to children. This will include engagement around emerging areas of harm online, such as through Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality platforms.

Pornography is a growing concern for children Online, the average age a child will access pornography is 13 years old, however, 1 in ten 9 year olds are seeing pornographic content. Charities continue to work closely with the Government regarding their ongoing review into pornography. They are calling for pornographic content to be regulated the same way online as it is offline, and are particularly concerned about pornographic content which can sexualise children. This includes 'barely legal' pornography, where young-looking, petite adults are made to look like children through props, toys and child-like clothing, and incest pornography. This content would be illegal offline, but is common online.

The concern is that viewing this content can lead to escalation pathways for users, where the content becomes more and more extreme until the next click is child sexual abuse material.

Parental questions answered by Barnados:

<https://www.barnados.org.uk/blog/online-safety-parents-questions>

What are schools doing to support keeping children safe online?

Today's pupils are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks.

We want to equip children with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world. We deliver online safety content within the curriculum and embed this within the wider whole school approach.

We use the [education for a connected world framework](#) for age-specific advice about the online knowledge and skills that pupils should have.

Ten:Ten is our main programme for teaching children about online safety. The content covers a wide range of issues that our children may face when online. These are discussed in a safe way and children are encouraged to talk to trusted adults about their online usage.

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/the-hub/consent-online-safety/>

We use Smoothwall to filter and monitor activity both on and off line on our school devices. Any offensive or inappropriate searches or content is reported and dealt with as appropriately indicated in our behaviour policy.

Online safety tips are shared regularly on our Twitter page via National Online Safety.