



The Safeguarding Team at Belmont

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's safeguarding team.



Mrs Clair Veli

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Miss Rachel Carroll

Deputy Designated Safeguarding
Lead (DDSL)



Ms Zoe Virgin

Family Support Worker (FSW)
& Attendance Officer



Mrs Kirstin Eccles
Mental Health Lead

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family well.

As part of our commitment to the wellbeing of our students, we want to address an important topic that has come to our attention recently: **self-harm** and **online safety**, particularly in relation to **YouTube**. For children with additional needs such as Communication and Interaction challenges, Cognition and Learning differences, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the online world can present both opportunities and risks. We want to ensure that all children feel safe, supported, and protected in these spaces.

At our school, we want to ensure that every child feels supported, safe, and understood. If you have concerns about your child's online activity, self-harming behaviours, or emotional wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our team is always here to listen and work together with you to find the best ways to support your child.

In addition to covering the important topics above, there is also some information on keeping you and your family safe from Halloween to Bonfire Night.

We hope you all have a lovely- and safe- half term and look forward to seeing you in Term 2.

Any questions, please do ask.

Clair Veli

Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead

The following policies have been updated: Safeguarding; Attendance; Relationships & Behaviour

You can access them here: [Policies & Procedures - Belmont School](#)

Report any concerns

If you suspect a child is being abused or is in danger of being abused, please contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead, or any member of staff. You can also contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on:

01452 426565.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999.

Self-Harm

Understanding Self-Harm

Self-harm can be a difficult topic to talk about, but it's vital to understand that it may manifest in children who are experiencing high levels of emotional distress. For children with ASD or other learning and communication challenges, emotions can be harder to express or regulate, making them more vulnerable to self-injurious behaviours.

Why does self-harm happen?

Self-harm is often a way for children to manage overwhelming emotions, frustrations, or sensory overload. They may not always have the language or coping mechanisms to express their feelings in other ways. Children with ASD or communication difficulties might feel frustrated when they cannot communicate their needs or manage changes in their environment, leading to these behaviours.

Supporting Children Who Self-Harm

If you are concerned that your child may be engaging in self-harm, here are some strategies to help:

- **Create a Safe Environment:** Remove any items that your child could use to hurt themselves, and create a calm, structured environment where they feel safe.
- **Build Emotional Literacy:** Help your child develop the language to express how they are feeling. Use visual aids or communication boards if necessary, and work with them to identify emotions like anger, sadness, or frustration.
- **Offer Sensory Alternatives:** Some children may self-harm to cope with sensory overload. Offer alternative activities that are soothing, such as playing with a sensory toy, deep pressure (weighted blankets or hugs), or listening to calming music.

Reach Out for Help

If you notice signs of self-harm, don't hesitate to reach out to a professional. Our school's inclusion team, alongside external therapists or counsellors, are available to provide guidance and support for both you and your child.

Here are some helplines and support services that offer specialised advice and support:

NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

NSPCC

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Details: Provides support for parents and carers concerned about a child's mental health, including those with SEND. They offer advice on safeguarding children and managing difficult situations, such as self-harm.

YoungMinds Parents Helpline

YOUNGMINDS

Phone: 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri, 9:30am – 4pm)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Details: A mental health charity that supports parents and carers of children and young people under 25. They provide advice on self-harm, ASD, and other SEND challenges.



Staying Safe on YouTube

Many children with special educational needs enjoy spending time on YouTube. It offers a wide range of educational and entertaining content, but it also poses some risks, especially if children are not supervised or aware of how to stay safe online. Some content may inadvertently expose them to harmful messages, or even normalise self-harm or other dangerous behaviours.

Here are some practical steps you can take to help your child stay safe on YouTube:

1. Monitor and Control Content

Ensure your child is using **YouTube Kids** rather than regular YouTube. This platform has more child-friendly content, and you can control what they see by blocking or approving channels. You can also enable restricted mode to filter out inappropriate content on YouTube.

2. Set Time Limits

Long periods of unsupervised internet usage can increase the chances of encountering harmful material. Set clear limits for how much time your child spends online, and encourage them to take breaks to avoid sensory overload.

3. Discuss the Content They Watch

Children with communication or cognition challenges may not always be able to tell the difference between safe and harmful content. Talk to them regularly about the videos they watch. Encourage open conversations about their favourite channels and characters, and use it as a chance to guide them towards positive and constructive content.

4. Teach Internet Safety Rules

Empower your child by teaching them simple rules for staying safe online, such as:

- Never sharing personal information.
- Reporting any upsetting or strange content.
- Understanding that not everything they see is real or safe to try.

5. Be Aware of Triggering Content

Certain types of videos, even when not overtly harmful, might still trigger anxiety, stress, or negative emotions in children. Sensory overload or content involving certain types of challenges or risks might lead to stress or frustration in children with ASD or other learning difficulties. Pay attention to their reactions and step in if something seems to distress them.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about YOUTUBE

Almost anyone with an internet connection knows YouTube. The Google-owned site lets anyone upload videos to be shared around the world, and as a result, it's an incredible resource with instant free access to material covering every conceivable topic. But with over 500 hours of video uploaded every minute, not all of it will be appropriate for young eyes.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

YouTube is free and can be accessed via numerous devices, even without creating a YouTube account. Some content is flagged as 'age-restricted' (requiring the user to be logged into an account with a verified age of 18), but children can still view some mildly inappropriate content. This can include profanity and violence, which some young users may find upsetting.

CONNECT WITH STRANGERS

YouTube recommends videos related to what the user has previously watched on their account, aiming to provide content that will interest them. This is intended to be helpful but it can also lead to binge-watching and screen addiction – especially if 'auto-play' is active. Users without an account are shown popular videos from the last 24 hours, which might not always be suitable for children.

RADICALISATION

YouTube's algorithm tends to promote content that's getting the most traffic – a lot of which can be quite extreme. This can be fine for harmless topics, but YouTube isn't regulated like television, and that means that conspiracy theories, fake news and hateful ideologies can occasionally surface to warp impressionable minds all too easily. Remember – the more they watch, the more they'll be recommended.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

YouTube is a social media platform which allows people to interact with other (usually unknown) users. Account holders can leave comments on any video they have access to, as well as message other users directly. Connecting with strangers online can potentially lead to children being exposed to adult language, cyberbullying and – in the worst cases – online predators. If a child is creating content themselves, this can increase the likelihood of them becoming a target.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

YouTube is teeming with trends and challenges, some of which are fun to watch and join in with. Children often find these immensely entertaining and might want to try them out. Most challenges tend to be safe, but many others may cause physical or emotional harm children who watch or copy them. The painful 'salt and ice challenge' – where people use these two ingredients to burn their skin – is just one of many examples.

SNEAKY SCAMMERS

The comments sections of popular content creators regularly have scammers posing as that influencer, attempting to lure users into clicking on their phishing links. Scammers impersonate YouTubers by adopting their names and profile images, and often offer cash gifts or 'get rich quick' schemes. Children may not realise that these users aren't who they claim to be.

Advice for Parents & Educators

APPLY RESTRICTED MODE

For older children, Restricted Mode is an optional setting that prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material (such as drug and alcohol abuse, graphic violence, and sexual content) to underage viewers. To prevent children from chancing across age-inappropriate content on the platform, we would recommend enabling Restricted Mode on each device that they use to access YouTube. It's worth also turning the auto-play feature off, to prevent YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending something inappropriate.



TRY GOOGLE FAMILY

Creating a Google Family account allows parents and carers to monitor what their child is watching, uploading, and sharing with other users. It will also display their recently watched videos, searches, and recommended videos. In general, a Google Family account gives a parent or carer oversight of how their child uses sites like YouTube and helps to ensure that they are only accessing appropriate content.



MONITOR ENGAGEMENT

YouTube is the online viewing platform of choice for billions of people, many of them under 18. Younger children will watch different content to older ones, of course. You may want to keep an eye on how children interact with this material – and, if applicable, with content creators – to understand what they're interested in. Remember that creators often share content outside of YouTube, so don't ignore their web presence elsewhere!



CONSIDER YOUTUBE KIDS

It's possible to sidestep most inappropriate content completely via Google's own YouTube Kids app for Android handsets and iPhone. This lets you filter content by 'preschool' (4 and under), 'younger' (ages 5 to 8) and 'older' (ages 9 to 12). This isn't a perfect substitute for personal supervision, as the app's filtering system is automated, and Google can't manually review all videos.

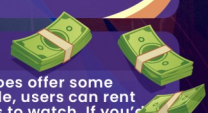
CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

YouTube gives users the option of uploading videos as 'private' or 'unlisted' – so they could be shared exclusively with family and friends, for example. Comments on videos can also be disabled and channels that a child is subscribed to can be hidden. If the child is only uploading videos set as 'private', they are far less likely to receive direct messages from strangers.



LIMIT SPENDING

Although YouTube is free, it does offer some in-app purchases. For example, users can rent and buy TV shows and movies to watch. If you'd like to avoid children purchasing content online, limit their access to online payment methods. Many parents have discovered the hard way that a child happily consuming a paid-for series quickly leads to an unexpected bill!



Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



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Keeping you and your family safe from Halloween to Bonfire Night



- Buying a costume? Make sure it's flame-resistant and has the CE mark.
- Making a costume? Avoid long parts and don't use flammable materials like bin liners.
- Opt for LED tea light and candles.
- Naked flames are dangerous, keep your children away from them.

STOP, DROP and ROLL

If your clothing catches fire, remember:

STOP where you are.



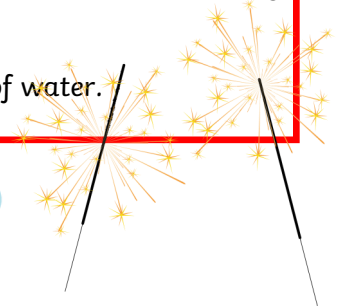
DROP to the floor.



ROLL over and over until the flames are out.



- Supervise children using sparklers and follow instructions on the packaging.
- Light sparklers one at a time.
- Wear gloves and keep sparklers at arm's length.
- You can put the end of a sparkler in a carrot, making it safer to hold.
- Put used sparklers in a bucket of water.



- Only buy fireworks marked with the British Safety Standard: 7114 or CE safety mark.
- Store safely in a closed box out of children's reach.
- Light fireworks at arm's length and stand well back.
- Never return to a lit firework: if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.

Report any concerns

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