

E safety Update



February 2018

1. Social media sites harming pupils' mental health, heads warn

Headteachers are calling for new social media laws to keep children safe, amid concerns that youngsters' use of these sites is harming their mental health.

Most school leaders have received reports of pupils being bullied or being exposed to unsuitable material – such as sexual content or hate speech, with some saying this is happening on a daily or weekly basis, according to a small-scale poll by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL).

There were also concerns about parents' behaviour on social media.

The poll, which questioned 460 secondary school heads across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, found that 95% believe that the mental health and wellbeing of pupils has suffered as a result of social media use over the past 12 months.

Nearly all of those polled said that they had received reports of pupils being bullied on social media, with 40% saying incidents were reported on a daily or weekly basis, while almost all had received reports of pupils encountering material including sexual content, self-harm, bullying or hate speech, with 27% saying this was reported on a daily or weekly basis.

More than nine in 10 (93%) said new laws and regulations should be introduced to ensure social media sites keep children safe, while three quarters (77%) think that the Government and social media firms should produce more information for parents.

A Government spokeswoman said: "Growing up in today's world is not always easy; that's why we are improving our support for children with mental health issues, with training for teachers on how to recognise and respond to mental illness.

"The Government is also looking at how we make sure pupils are taught about mental wellbeing and the effect of internet harm as part of our work to improve Relationships Education and Relationships

and Sex Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education.

"The Government is also taking action to make the UK the safest place in the world by introducing a social media code of practice and an annual transparency report.

"Additionally, we have funded guidance on how schools can tackle cyberbullying. These measures include setting standards and tracking companies' progress in stamping out online harm."

Link: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-5480193/Social-media-sites-harming-pupils-mental-health-heads-warn.html#ixzz59FABXwHq>

For more information about e safety :

- go to <http://www.blackpoolaspireacademy.co.uk>
- come into school and talk to a member of Student Services

2. Children need social media watchdog, says commissioner

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A WATCHDOG must be appointed to protect young people from online dangers, Scotland's children's commissioner has warned, as he claimed the internet is not "designed with children in mind".

Bruce Adamson is calling for digital citizenship lessons, an ombudsman to mediate between under-18s and social media companies and simplified terms and conditions for digital services for young people.

His comments come as a survey for the Royal Bank of Scotland found that young people are often reckless with their personal information online, even sharing banking details, and passwords.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Mobile Micro-leisure Report found that 72 per cent of young people said mobile banking made them feel more in control of their finances. But they showed a "profound" lack of knowledge of how to stay secure, with nearly one in six 18-24 year olds sharing their log in details for online accounts with a friend.

Many were as prepared to share their banking password as they were to share their catch-up TV log-in details, showing a "worrying lack of understanding of the measures that would lower the likelihood of them becoming the victim of scams or mobile fraud".

Mr Adamson, whose remit is for under-18s, said help in navigating online dangers should start early. "At the moment, children are not being equipped with adequate skills to negotiate their lives online," he said. "Digital media intensify both risks and opportunities for children.

"The sooner child rights issues are recognised and addressed as part of the wider rush to embrace digital and business innovations the more secure a foundation can be laid for a present and future."

Adults aim to prepare children with the skills to interact with the outside world, but are less able to do so for the online world, he said.

He is backing calls for change from the English children's commissioner, he added. "She is calling for a compulsory digital citizenship programme, simplified terms and conditions for digital services offered to children; and a new children's digital ombudsman to mediate between under-18s and social media companies."

An NSPCC Scotland spokesperson added: "We encourage parents to have regular conversations with their children about their online lives and how to keep themselves safe.

"Social networks must also be forced to sign up to a universal set of rules including automatic Safe Accounts for under 18s with high privacy settings as default and location settings locked off."

Link: http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/homenews/16064531.Children_need_social_media_watchdog__says_commissioner/