

E safety Update



September 2018

1. Sky data poll: 91% say social media is

Making bullying worse

More than 1,000 people were surveyed for the research, and just 1% of respondents believe that platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram make bullying less of a problem among children. Almost two in three of those polled - 64% - think smartphones should be banned from schools

Link: <https://www.safeguardingessentials.com/newslinks/latest>

2. Exam boards reveal 'huge amount' of time spent checking for cheating on social media

Exam boards are spending a "huge amount" of time and effort checking for cheating on social media, exams chiefs have revealed.

The news comes as the Joint Council for Qualifications have set up dedicated teams to monitor social media as part of moves to clamp down on cheating.

The JCQ - which represents UK exam boards - also announced an independent inquiry into exam malpractice.

Malpractice is still "extremely rare", it was suggested, and official figures show that last year, 2,715 penalties were issued to candidates (0.01%), along with 895 to school staff and 120 to schools and colleges. Sanctions issued to candidates were overwhelmingly for possession of a mobile phone in an exam, the JCQ noted.

Announcing the new commission, to be led by Sir John Dunford, Mark Bedlow of the OCR exam board said: "Malpractice that is deliberate is still extremely rare. "But we are seeing the occasional story pop up and it is getting profile and we are also seeing students increasingly use technology in different ways." He added that a lot of work is already done to combat malpractice, but more can be done to look at issues such as the role of social media, and to understand the reasons for malpractice.

He added that the board has people examining social media platforms throughout the year. The commission is due to begin its work in September, with a final report published next spring. Exam chiefs insisted that the inquiry is not a response to any particular issue, but is part of ongoing work to prevent malpractice. The announcement comes just weeks before teenagers across the country learn their GCSE and A-level results. Last month it was revealed that exams regulator Ofqual had launched an investigation after an A-level maths paper was allegedly leaked online, just a day before thousands of students were due to sit the paper. Earlier this year, the JCQ issued a video reminding students that mobile phones are banned from the exam hall, and the consequences of flouting the ban.

Link: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/07/26/exam-boards-reveal-huge-amount-time-spent-checking-cheating/>

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3. Nigel Huddleston: Parliament cannot fully protect children from dangers of online gaming. Companies and parents must fulfil their duties too

The internet has brought many benefits but also challenges as governments, industry and the public adapt their behaviours and attitudes in an increasingly online world. The UK government wishes to create an environment in which businesses can thrive while also ensuring that the UK is the safest place to be online. This is no easy task as we are still in the early stages of the digital era. Offerings, attitudes and policies are still evolving.

People go online for a variety of reasons: to transact, to communicate, to be educated, informed and entertained. While it is increasingly recognised that what is unacceptable offline is unacceptable online, challenges remain with regard to defining what is and isn't 'appropriate content' and who should be responsible for enabling or restricting access to different types of content.

The recent debate over online games – driven in part by the international success of Fortnite – has ignited the discussion around some of these challenges. The debate raises both moral and practical issues, particularly about the wellbeing of children. As stories of children excessively and compulsively playing games like Fortnite multiply (with one nine-year-old child apparently choosing to wet herself rather than leave the game), it is important for all stakeholders – including government – to consider the impact of online games on children's welfare.

This is one of many issues that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) looked at in its response to a consultation on the Internet Safety Strategy. The department considered the responsibilities of companies to their users, the use of technical solutions to prevent online harms and the government's role in supporting parents and users in being safe online.

The most obvious challenge of online games is the compulsive habits that they encourage. In Fortnite, for example, games last for 20 minutes and there is ultimately only one winner. This means that the time investment in starting a new game seems relatively low but there is a repeated psychological incentive in 99 of the 100 players (the losers) to try again and play until they win. Many players will never win a game, but the competitive instinct created by failure and the short game time encourages them to play one game after another. Games across genres follow this basic cyclical model.

This is reminiscent of the impact of gambling – repeated losses incentivising repeated investment, only the investment in this case is time rather than money. The Government recognised this in the gambling industry and created the Gambling Commission to work with the industry to help it become more responsible and create safer environments. There is onus now on industries and parents to look at how to create similarly safe environments for children playing games and the Government is open to equipping them to be best placed to do so.

The Government cannot necessarily legislate to completely protect children from all of the dangers of online gaming, but it can lead a public discussion and equip parents and companies with the tools they need to prioritise child safety and take their responsibilities seriously. A wider Internet Safety Strategy is being formulated and measures like screen time directives are being looked at, however much of the responsibility must fall on gaming companies and parents to fulfil their duties in protecting vulnerable children against compulsive habits and abuse in online gaming.

For more information about e safety :

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