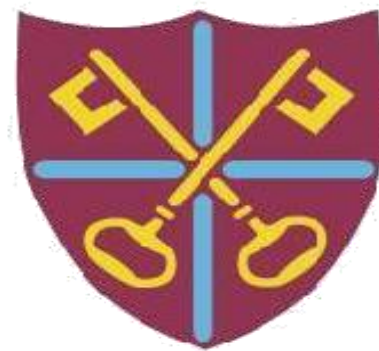


St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Safeguarding & Child Protection Newsletter

Issue 12: April 2026



At St. Peter's

At St. Peter's, we believe that every child matters and everything we do has each and every child at heart. Your child's wellbeing, safety, achievement and their happiness underpins every decision that we make and determines how we work. Often when safeguarding is talked about the assumption is that it is just child protection - when a child is suffering harm, or is in danger from suffering harm.

However, safeguarding is much broader than this and takes into account a very wide range of areas.

St. Peter's Safeguarding Team will publish a regular newsletter that will give you current advice and information about issues that will hopefully keep all of our children safe in school and at home.

Who is responsible for Safeguarding?

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. We are dedicated to working with the wider community, including the parish community and our families to tackle any safeguarding concerns and keep all children safe.

Who is St. Peter's Safeguarding Team?

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Hall (Deputy Head teacher)
- Deputy designated Safeguarding Lead -Mrs Kelly (Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Tucker (SENCO)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Bolden (KS1 Phase Lead)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead– Mrs Walsh (Family Support Worker)
- Designated Safeguarding Governor– Mrs Herbert -Lafferty

Posters displaying this information are placed around school as a reminder for adults and children of who to go to if there are any concerns.

What is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)?

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads have a crucial role in taking responsibility for child protection issues in school. The DSL must be a senior member of the school's leadership team. DSL's and DDSL's are trained to take on this role and that training is updated every two years with additional training and conferences in between. The DSL and DDSL have many responsibilities including working with staff and agencies involved in safeguarding children, working with parents and families, giving advice to staff, training staff, managing referrals from staff and investigating concerns passing them onto the correct body as necessary, and managing the records of safeguarding and Child Protection concerns.

Talking to children about what's happening in the world

Many of the events happening around the world are discussed frequently in the news and on social media. Even if adults try to shield children from it, they often pick up snippets of conversations, headlines or comments from other children. Because of this, children may already have partial information, misunderstandings or worries that they have not shared.

For primary-aged children, it is usually better that the trusted adults in their lives help them make sense of what they are hearing. When parents and carers talk openly and calmly about world events, it helps children feel safe, supported and able to ask questions. The goal is not to give lots of detail or expose children to distressing information. Instead, it is about helping them understand the basics, reassuring them that they are safe and reminding them that many people are working hard to help.

HOW PARENTS AND CARERS CAN APPROACH THE CONVERSATION

START BY LISTENING

Ask what your child has already heard. This helps you understand their level of knowledge and whether they are worried about something specific.

KEEP EXPLANATIONS SIMPLE AND FACTUAL

Use clear language and avoid too many details. Answer the question they asked rather than giving long explanations.

OFFER REASSURANCE

Remind children that they are safe and that many adults, leaders, helpers and communities are working to solve problems and keep people safe.

FOCUS ON HELPERS AND POSITIVE ACTIONS

Children find comfort in knowing that people help each other in difficult situations.

FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

Some children will want to ask lots of questions; others may only want a brief explanation. Both responses are normal.

CONVERSATION STARTERS YOU COULD USE

Parents/carers sometimes find it difficult to know how to begin these discussions. The following questions and sentence starters can help open the door:

1 "Have you heard anyone talking about what's happening in the news lately?"

2 "What have you heard about what's going on in the world at the moment?"

3 "How did that make you feel when you heard about it?"
"Do you have any questions about it?"

4 "Sometimes the news can sound a bit scary. If you ever hear something that worries you, you can always talk to me about it."

5 "There are lots of people working very hard to help others and make things better."

Why these conversations matter

Talking about world events in a calm and supportive way can help children to:

- feel safe and reassured by hearing information from a trusted adult
- correct misunderstandings they may have picked up from others
- develop emotional awareness by talking about feelings and worries
- build resilience and empathy by learning how people help each other during difficult times.

When children are not given opportunities to talk, they sometimes fill in the gaps with their imagination, which can make things feel scarier than they really are.

Top tip: Use child-friendly news

- If your child is interested in finding out more, it can help to use news sources designed specifically for children. Programmes such as BBC Newsround explain current events in a clear, age-appropriate way that avoids unnecessary distress.

Why social media isn't appropriate for primary-aged children

Many children become curious about social media while they are still in primary school. They may hear friends talking about it, see older siblings using it or ask for accounts themselves. While this curiosity is completely natural, most social media platforms are designed for teenagers and adults, not younger children.

Popular social media platforms, such as **TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube**, set a minimum age of 13 for creating an account. These limits are largely linked to online data and advertising regulations rather than a guarantee that the platforms are suitable for young children and teenagers.

In reality, many of the conversations, videos and images shared on these platforms are created by and for older teenagers and adults. This means children may easily come across content, language or ideas that are confusing, upsetting or simply not appropriate for their age. Even for children who are 13 or older, these platforms often require careful guidance and supervision from adults.

For younger children in primary school, social media can therefore expose them to online spaces that they are not yet ready to manage safely or confidently.

How to talk to your child about social media

When children ask about social media, a calm and open conversation can help them understand the reasons behind family rules.

- Explain the purpose of age limits**
Let children know that these rules exist to help keep them safe.
- Focus on readiness rather than punishment**
Frame it as something they will be able to explore when they are older and better prepared.
- Acknowledge their feelings**
Children may feel frustrated when friends seem to have access. Listening to their feelings helps them feel understood.
- Keep the conversation ongoing**
Rather than a single "no," make it an ongoing discussion about online safety and responsibility.

Conversation starters

If you are unsure how to begin the conversation, these prompts can help:

- "I know lots of children talk about social media. Have you heard people at school talking about it?"
- "What do you know about apps like TikTok or Instagram?"
- "Some apps are designed for teenagers rather than younger children. Do you know why that might be?"
- "Our job as parents is to help keep you safe while you're still learning about the online world."

Why waiting matters

Choosing to delay social media use can help children in several important ways.

Protecting emotional wellbeing

Social media often includes comments, likes and comparisons that can affect children's confidence and self-esteem.

Reducing exposure to unsuitable content

Even with filters and controls, children may come across upsetting, confusing or inappropriate material.

Supporting healthy friendships

Children benefit most from learning social skills through face-to-face interaction, play and real-world experiences.

Helping children build digital skills gradually

As children grow older, they develop stronger judgement, critical thinking and resilience that help them manage online environments safely.

Smartphone free childhood

To create a smartphone-free childhood, families can delay giving children smartphones until at least age 14 by signing a "Parent Pact" to reduce peer pressure, providing alternatives like simple phones for communication, and modeling a healthy relationship with technology themselves. Encouraging offline activities like bike rides or walks and setting clear family rules around technology use also helps build a digital-free environment.

For parents and families

- **Sign the Parent Pact:**

Join a movement like the [Smartphone Free Childhood campaign](#) to collectively delay smartphones until at least age 14 and social media until 16.

- **Set clear rules:**

Establish boundaries for both children and yourself regarding when and where devices are used.

- **Lead by example:**

Limit your own smartphone use, especially during family time, meals, and conversations.

- **Provide alternatives:**

For children who need a way to communicate, consider a simple phone that can only make calls and send texts.

- **Encourage offline activities:**

Replace screen time with active time by going for walks, playing sports, or pursuing hobbies together.

- **Talk to your child:**

Have open conversations about their online activities and the importance of being kind and respectful online.

Helping your child use YouTube and YouTube Kids safely

YouTube is hugely popular with children. It can be fun, creative and educational, but like any online space, it isn't risk free. Even apps designed for children, such as YouTube Kids, can sometimes show content that isn't right for younger viewers.

⚠️ What parents and carers should know about the risks

Most children start by watching something completely harmless. The risk usually comes from how the platform works, not from what they set out to watch.

Some common ways children can come across unsuitable content include:

- **Autoplay:** one video can quickly lead to another without your child choosing it.

How parents/carers can reduce this risk:

- Turn Autoplay off in settings
- Encourage children to choose videos rather than letting videos be chosen for them
- Check what the next suggested video is if Autoplay is left on
- Use YouTube Kids 'Approved Content Only' mode where possible
- **Search:** children might search for something innocent but get unexpected results

How parents/carers can reduce this risk:

- Turn off search in YouTube Kids
- Sit with children when they are searching, especially younger primary-aged children
- Talk about what to do if they see something confusing or upsetting
- Save or subscribe to trusted channels so children can go straight to safe content
- **Adverts:** young children can struggle to tell the difference between adverts and videos

How parents/carers can reduce this risk:

- Explain simply what an advert is (for example: "This is trying to sell you something")
- Watch together sometimes so you can talk about adverts when they appear
- Consider using YouTube Kids, which usually has fewer and more age-appropriate adverts
- Teach children not to click on adverts or pop-ups without checking with you first

Even YouTube Kids, while safer, is not perfect because content is filtered by systems rather than checked by

Practical ways

TO MAKE
YOUTUBE SAFER



Use YouTube Kids where possible



- Set up separate profiles for each child
- Choose an age level
- Turn on 'Approved Content Only'
- Set screen time limits
- Block videos or channels you don't want your child to see

When using normal YouTube, switch on safety settings



- Turn on Restricted Mode
- Use Supervised Accounts to manage what they can access
- Turn Autoplay off
- Check their watch history regularly

Watch together when you can



- Ask what they like watching
- Occasionally watch a video with them
- Keep devices in shared family spaces

Talk about what to do if something feels wrong



- It's never their fault if they see something upsetting
- They can tell you and won't be in trouble
- They can close the video and come and get you

A helpful mindset for parents and carers

It can help to think of YouTube like a busy public place. There are lots of great things there, but children still need guidance, boundaries and support while they learn how to navigate it safely.

You don't have to know everything about technology. Staying curious, setting simple rules, and keeping conversations open are some of the most powerful safety tools you have.

Important update for parents and carers: Understanding AI and the new UK law

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly become a part of our children's digital playground. From creating imaginative stories to generating funny images, AI tools offer endless possibilities. However, it's crucial to be aware of how innocent fun can sometimes cross into harmful territory.

The appeal of AI for children

Children are naturally curious and love to experiment. AI tools that can transform photos or generate images can be fascinating. They might use these tools to create humorous pictures of themselves or friends, thinking it's all in good fun.

When fun turns harmful

What starts as a joke can quickly escalate. Altering images to make someone look silly can lead to embarrassment or bullying. More concerning is the potential to create or share images that are inappropriate or indecent, even if unintentionally. Such actions can have serious emotional impacts on all involved.

The legal perspective

The UK has stringent laws to protect individuals from the creation and distribution of indecent images, especially involving minors. Even digitally altered images fall under these laws. It's essential to understand that:

- Creating or sharing indecent images of anyone under 18 is illegal, regardless of intent.
- Possessing such images, even if created as a joke, is a criminal offence.
- Encouraging others to create or share these images is also against the law.

