



## SAFEGUARDING TEAM

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

Gemma Jeacock-Stevens

Designated Safeguarding Officer and  
Deputy Headteacher



Louise Nash Molly Clark

Deputy Designated Safeguarding  
Officers



Karla Weale Kerrie McEvoy

# Safeguarding Newsletter

## January 2025

Dear Parents & Carers,

*Happy New Year!*

As we begin 2025, we want to reaffirm our commitment to the safety and well-being of all pupils at The Milestone School.

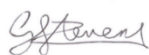
These newsletters focus on important safeguarding topics and how you can support your child's safety both online and offline.

### Parental Involvement

- **Engage in Conversations:** Where possible, talk to your child about their online activities. Understanding their digital world is key to helping them navigate it safely.
- **Resources for Parents:** We have a variety of resources available, that can be shared by asking your class teacher for more information on popular apps like TikTok and Roblox. These can help you understand potential risks and how to mitigate them. There are also useful Online Safety websites including:
  - **National Online Safety** – safety guides on ALL aspects of internet use: <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>
  - **Internet Matters** – wide range of online safety advice for parents to keep their children safe on -line: <https://www.internetmatters.org/>
  - **NSPCC – Keeping Children Safe Online: Teaching Your Child about Internet & Online Safety** [Online safety resources and guides | NSPCC Learning](#)

You will see on the left of this page information about who to speak to if you have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, however all our staff are trained in safeguarding, if you want to discuss any concerns with them. Any questions, please do ask.

Gemma Jeacock-Stevens



Deputy Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

### 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.



## Spotlight on...



### Online Safety:

#### Tips for Supporting Your Child's Online Safety

1. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear rules about screen time and the types of websites and apps your child can use.
2. **Use Technology Wisely:** Familiarise yourself with parental controls and privacy settings to help protect your child's online experiences.
3. **Stay Informed:** Keep up-to-date with the latest trends in online safety. The [NSPCC online safety hub](#) offers valuable advice and guides for parents.

Watch: [Watch Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones | Stream free on Channel 4](#)

A social experiment looking at the impact of smartphones on children's behaviour, challenging a group of Year 8 pupils to give up their smartphones completely for 21 days.

Visit: [CEOP Education](#) for advice and support

**The National Crime Agency's CEOP Education team aim to help protect children and young people from online child sexual abuse.**

### 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.



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# ▶ YOUTUBE ▶

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

### 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 to 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 changing 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 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.



The  
**National**  
College

@wake\_up\_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

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