Online Safety Newsletter Sept 2026

Sexting and nudes

It is important that young people are aware of the risks and responsibilities of sexting and sharing nudes. Once an image is sent, the sender has no control over what will happen to that image or video. Young people must think carefully before sharing such images and should never feel forced to do so.

When you're under 18 It is against the law to send nudes/sexual videos of yourself to anyone else. It is also against the law to save or share a nude/sexual video of somebody under the age of 18.

Childline explains more about sexting and nudes at the link below, including what your child can do if somebody is asking them to share nudes, what to do if somebody is saying they will share their images and where you can get more support from:

https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translation tool on our web version: https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/september-2026-secondary

New guidance issued due to concern of AI-manipulated images

Photos of children that seem completely innocent can be manipulated using artificial intelligence (AI) to create sexualised or abusive images. There is a growing threat that children's images shared online are being manipulated by criminals into AI generated sexual abuse material. As concerns grow, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) have issued new guidance to help you understand the risks around AI image manipulation and advice on how to speak to your child about AI and image consent.

The IWF states that child sexual abuse images or videos created or altered using AI may include:

- Everyday images of a child or young person that are manipulated into child sexual abuse imagery, including images taken from social media, websites or messaging apps, that are manipulated into sexualised or abusive imagery. These are sometimes known as 'deepfakes'.
- Images or videos that look like a real child but are completely artificial.
- AI technology that digitally removes clothing from existing images to create nude or semi-nude images, sometimes known as 'nudifying'.

[source: IWF https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/ai-child-abuse-imagery-parent-guide/ accessed 25.08.26]

What can I do?

The guidance provides practical advice about sharing photographs of your child online. Some useful things to consider are:

- Think before you share photographs online. The IWF suggest creating a 'close friends' group to share images.
- Check and adjust your privacy settings on all social media accounts.
- Understand the steps to take if you or your child has any concerns and the organisations you can contact.

Where can I find the new guidance?

The full guidance can be accessed at the link below. It also includes a video highlighting how everyday photos can be misused using AI tools.
https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/ai-child-abuse-imagery-parent-guide/

You can find the full press release/announcement here:
https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/new-guidance-for-parents-and-carers-as-ai-manipulated-images-of-children-become-a-growing-concern

YouTube

YouTube is one of the most popular platforms, available across many different devices - phones, tablets and Smart TVS etc. **YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13,** however, younger children can still access YouTube with consent from a parent/ guardian. There are different options available to access YouTube, depending on your child's age:

1. YouTube Kids – a separate app that includes a smaller selection of videos based on the age category you select: Preschool (ages 4 and under), Younger (ages 5–8) or Older (ages 9–12).

2. Supervised accounts – a parent-managed version of YouTube that allows you to control the content your child can access. You can select one of the following options:

- **Explore** - Generally for viewers aged 9+.
- **Explore more** - Generally for viewers aged 13+
- **Most of YouTube** - This setting includes almost everything except for videos marked as 18+.

Find out more: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420

What do I need to be aware of?

Whilst YouTube can be educational and fun, it is important to be aware of the potential risks, such as:

- **Inappropriate content**
- **Excessive Screentime –** particularly due to the autoplay feature.
- **Unwanted contact / cyberbullying –** particularly via comments if your child is sharing videos.
- **Algorithms –** algorithms influence what we see to keep us engaged. This can lead to a user being exposed to large amounts of content about one topic/theme, which may not be helpful if it is negative.
- **Adverts** that may not be aimed at or suitable for your child's age.

What can I do?

- Set up appropriate parental controls.
- Show your child the reporting and blocking tools available.
- Watch YouTube together or supervise use.

Further information

https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/youtube-app/

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A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives

The Children's Commissioner has published this guide to help you support your child and make starting conversations about their online world easier. It's a useful read: https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/12/cc-what-i-wish-parent-guide.pdf

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Nex Playground

Nex Playground is a new video game console, which features games to get kids active. The games have no ads, no violence and no chat features, however it does rely on purchasing either a yearly or quarterly game subscription. You can find out more here: https://www.nexplayground.com/en-gb

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Online Safety Quiz

The NSPCC have created this quiz to test your child's knowledge on how to stay safe online. It's a great way to start a conversation with your child about their online life. You can access the quiz here: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/quiz/

WhatsApp Usernames

WhatsApp is introducing the use of usernames, so people no longer have to share their phone number. Wayne Denner provides an overview of the new features, what you need to consider and steps you can take here: https://www.waynedenner.com/whatsapp-usernames-what-parents-need-to-know/