

# STAYING SAFE ONLINE



The online world is a necessity for many young people to access college work and it delivers huge benefits. However, many parents feel concerned about the content their son/daughter/young person is accessing.

Although rare, there is a risk that increased online activity and feelings of stress and isolation may be exploited by negative influences and online groomers to target vulnerable young people. Extremists may use the COVID-19 outbreak to promote hateful views, for example through conspiracy theories blaming a particular group for the virus, or through spreading misinformation regarding these groups' responses to it.

An understanding of digital safety will help parents and carers safeguard loved ones from harm, whether that's sexual exploitation, fraud, or extremist influences seeking to radicalise young people.



## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT MY SON/DAUGHTER/ YOUNG PERSON MAY BE BEING EXPLOITED ONLINE?

The following behaviours may be quite common among teenagers but taken together they could be indicators that your son/daughter/young person may need some help:

- Exploring new and unusual websites, chat forums and platforms with a greater degree of anonymity.
- Joining new or secret groups.
- Speaking with new friends or being secretive about chats during online gaming or in forums.
- Using language you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Watching, sharing or creating films online linked to religious, political or racial hate.



## WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO KEEP MY SON/DAUGHTER/ YOUNG PERSON SAFE ONLINE?

- If you have downloaded new apps or bought new technology remember to adjust privacy settings.
- You can switch on family friendly filters to help prevent inappropriate content being accessed - The UK Safer Internet Centre provides guidance on how to do this.

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## #3

### WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE IF MY SON/DAUGHTER/ YOUNG PERSON IS BEING EXPLOITED ONLINE?

- Teachers, healthcare practitioners, social workers, the police, charities, psychologists and religious leaders work together to safeguard those vulnerable to radicalisation through a programme known as Prevent.
- Support includes dealing with mental or emotional health issues, or digital safety training for parents.
- If you are worried that a loved one is being radicalised, you can call the police on 101 to get advice or share a concern so that they can get safeguarding support. You should also report your concerns to Wigan & Leigh College Safeguarding Team - [safeguarding@wigan-leigh.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wigan-leigh.ac.uk)
- If you think someone is in immediate danger, or if you see or hear something that may be terrorist-related call 999 or the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

## #4

### I HAVE SEEN HATEFUL CONTENT ONLINE THAT COULD CAUSE HARM. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- The Action Counters Terrorism campaign provides information on the type of online presence that is of concern and offers a link to an anonymous online reporting form. A specialist police team will examine the content and will work with internet companies to remove it if appropriate.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

These resources will help you understand and protect your daughter/son/ young person from online harm:

- Educate Against Hate - Parents' Resources
- Let's Talk About It  
- Working Together to Prevent Terrorism
- UK Safer Internet Centre  
- Online Safety Tips
- Parent Zone
- Thinkuknow
- Act Early - Safeguarding Website

## LOCAL CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

- Wigan & Leigh College Safeguarding Team - [safeguarding@wigan-leigh.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wigan-leigh.ac.uk)
- If you have concerns that someone is being radicalised call **0800 789321** for the Police PREVENT team.
- If you feel there is an immediate threat to life, call **999**.