



Keeping Excellence
in Training Standards

JUNE 2021

EQUALITY MATTERS

KEITS Training Services Ltd

THIS ISSUE:

E-Safety: How to stay safe online!

E-SAFETY

- **WHAT IS ONLINE?**
- **THE DANGERS!**
- **WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR!**
- **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF!**



With research in 2020 suggesting that over 84% of UK adults aged 16 and over have smartphones, now more than ever it is important to understand how to keep you and your friends safe whilst online.

Here are the facts about what it really means to be online, the dangers it presents and apps to be aware of.

We have also put together some top tips on E-safety and how to stay safe online.

WHAT IS ONLINE?

We hear this phrase a lot nowadays.

"I was online yesterday" or, " Did you see what they posted online?"

But what does it really mean?

Being online is when a piece of equipment is connected to the internet. It is also now being used to describe the activities that people perform on the internet and the data that is available, such as online gaming and online learning.

The pandemic has seen more of us relying on the internet to stay connected with our friends and family, but also to continue with studies for school, college and apprenticeships. But, with this comes a higher risk of the dangers of being online.

For a lot of young people their online presence and identity is just as important as their physical appearance. How you are seen online can determine your 'social status' within your peer group. Like it or not we are all connected and can affect each others lives by the click of a button. We can make someone smile by sending a feel good picture or quote. But, with the rise of 'influencers', 'trolls' and new apps that encourage anonymous interactions with others, the world is also seeing a rapid increase in cases of cyber bullying that is sadly leading to young people taking their own lives.

We are all now connected by the internet, like neurons in a giant brain!

Stephen Hawking





DANGERS!

In order for us to be safe online we first need to understand what the dangers are.

Invasion of privacy

If you are documenting online with images and comments or you are engaging with others online, you are allowing people, sometimes people you do not know, into your life. With this comes the ability for those people to invade your privacy and know too much about you. This can lead to feelings of vulnerability and being more susceptible to bullying or grooming.

Identity Theft

When you are online and allowing people access to your personal information, you are also more susceptible to someone stealing your identity. They could use that information to commit fraud. They could take out credit cards in your name and spend huge amounts of money. This could lead to credit problems for you in the future and you may be falsely held accountable in extreme circumstances.

Cyberbullying

This is probably the fastest growing danger for young people online. Social media apps are there to allow you to connect, but this can be abused and people can use these apps to bully and harass. Sadly, it has led to 1 in 8 young people taking their own lives. Beat Bullying in 2020 reported that 5% of young people have self harmed and 3% have attempted to take their own life due to cyberbullying.

Exposure to offensive content

Being online puts you at risk of being exposed to some offensive and sensitive content. This is often unwanted and can be very distressing and traumatic. You may come across indecent images or videos on your feed, during a search or it may be sent to you.

Grooming

Grooming is the act of building a relationship and trust with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. The predator actively seeks them out and may also potentially build a relationship with their family. The intention is either to exploit, traffick and abuse or sometimes all three. With an online presence and the ability to be able to produce fake profiles, coupled with it being very hard to police and monitor, the occurrences of online grooming are increasing.

Peer Pressure

There is a danger when online to succumb to peer pressure. Particularly with the rise of social media, people may feel they need to look or act in a certain way and may be bullied if they do not 'conform'. There may also be pressure to perform certain acts on social media or via an electronic method such as instant messaging services or video calls. These acts can often be sexual and once the picture or video is online, it can be used as a form of abuse. It can be shared with others both connected to the person and all around the world. This is a form of abuse and in some cases can lead to serious mental health problems, exploitation, injury or even death.

Apps

An app is a piece of software downloaded onto a mobile device that has many uses, from staying connected to your friends to sharing images, videos, or personal achievements. Most are completely harmless on the surface, but some have the potential to cause serious harm both mentally and physically. They can be used to bully, exploit, harass and abuse.

Challenges

There is a fashion for challenges on social media. Some are harmless fun, such dances or a sporting task. But sadly, some are dangerous and their sole purpose is to harm or sadly to kill. The reality is that some young people are falling victim to this 'craze' and are ending up seriously injured and in some cases dead.



WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR!

Any form of social media has the potential for misuse and to cause distress. But, there are some apps that hold more potential risks than others.

Do you know what the danger apps are?

Snapchat

Snapchat enables users to send and receive pictures and videos. The 'snaps' are only available for a short period of time and disappear after they are viewed. The idea is that you keep the 'snaps' going with the other person and the longer they run the more emojis and filters etc you open up. This can be fun, but it is also open to abuse. Due to the fact the 'snaps' disappear it can be hard to evidence abuse. This may leave the victim feeling vulnerable and not sure what to do. Snapchat also has a 'map' which allows people to see your location and again opens up the user to potential abuse and vulnerability.

Tik Tok

However much fun Tik Tok can be with the dances and videos it is important to understand the dangers of the so called 'challenges'. Some are deliberately designed to cause harm such as the 'concussion challenge'. This challenge is when a group of friends stand in a circle and throw a random object into the air. The participants are not allowed to move whilst waiting for the object to hit one of them on the head. This has led to a lot of serious head injuries.



The 'skull breaker' is when three people stand in a row. The middle person has no idea what is going to happen and is asked to jump into the air. Then, the two people either side kick the middle person's legs out from under them. This often leads to them hitting their head on the floor resulting in concussions and occasionally more serious injuries and there has been at least one reported death. The 'black out challenge' is when the participant films themselves cutting off their air supply to the point at which they pass out. This is incredibly dangerous as a lack of oxygen to the brain can cause serious damage and sometimes the participant does not wake up and may die.

Anonymous apps

There are a few apps that are specifically designed so you do not know who is interacting. There are apps called Secret, Whisper, YOLO and Tellonym which all involve messages, videos and feedback being given or sent anonymously. This clearly has the potential to be dangerous and the users often suffer a barrage of abuse and trolling. This is a form of bullying and harassment but due to the anonymous nature it is hard to prosecute.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

We have put together a few tips on what to do and how to protect yourself when online and interacting on social media.

'STRANGERS'

We all remember being warned of stranger danger when we were little. This is just as important when online.

You don't really know who you are interacting with. Be careful what you share with these people, they may not have your best interests at heart.

PRIVACY SETTINGS

Check your privacy settings on all your apps carefully. Make sure people cannot see your location and that they don't have access to your sensitive information.

Avoid using hastags # as this makes your posts public and gives access to anyone not on your friends lists.

PASSWORDS

Make sure you use strong passwords to help prevent people gaining access to your accounts. Avoid using birthdays or where you live etc.

Try to use a mixture of upper and lower case letters as well as numbers and characters.

IT'S FOREVER

People often think if you delete something it has gone. Sadly, this is not the case. It remains somewhere and can often be found. People may also save a post that could be used against you in the future.

So, think before you post!

PERSONAL INFORMATION

It is important to keep your personal information private.

Do not share with anyone you do not know and do not make it accessible to the public online.

Not only could it lead to identity theft, but also could make you vulnerable to abuse, harassment, trolling and bullying.

FAKE NEWS

Quite often what you see online is not always the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Check the sources carefully and remember people will only post what they want you to see and believe online.

This is often not the full picture so don't compare yourselves to others.

RESPECT

Remember to have respect for other people online. Their opinions are theirs and variety and individuality is what makes the world an exciting place to live.

Just because you do not agree does not always mean they are wrong. If you suspect it is illegal or inciting hate, report to the app administrators who will investigate.

STOP!

Know when it is getting too much for you. Know when to stop and put your phone away.

If you feel yourself becoming too involved, upset, angry or affected, walk away and take some time out. Self care is not selfish, it is a priority and essential.

GET HELP

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Talk to someone about what is going on or what you are feeling. There are reporting avenues on all apps to help remove trolls and abusers. There are many charities who also offer support. We have put some of their links below for you, just click on the logo.