What should we do about it?

It can be hard for children to speak out about online abuse as they can fear there will be negative consequences (such as their devices being taken away) if they tell anyone what is happening.

It is essential that children feel comfortable to share and discuss any concerns they have and that whoever they tell will take them seriously, act on what they have been told and take positive steps to move the situation forward.

If your child does disclose any incidents of online abuse, you should;

- listen calmy to what they have to say
- remember they may feel anxious, concerned or embarrassed about the information they are sharing with you
- ensure they know it is not their fault and they have done the right thing sharing the information with you

While the internet is often a positive and somewhat essential part of our children's lives, we must remain aware that young people can be vulnerable online.

Here are some final actions we can take to support the safe use of the internet;

- be available to talk to your children about anything worrying them online
- appreciate how important the online world is to young people and take their concerns seriously
- make discussions about online safety a regular part of your routine, rather than just a one-off chat
- set rules for when and how the internet will be accessed at home

Online Safety Newsletter

Spring 1 2021

What do we know about **online abuse**?

This newsletter will focus on sharing information on this topic as well as signs to look out for and support strategies.

Understanding online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse which happens on the internet. This is facilitated through technology such as;

- computers
- tablets
- mobile phones
- gaming devices

ONLINE ABUSE

Online abuse can occur anywhere which allows communication between users via live chatting, commenting or private messaging.

While using the internet, children may experience different types of abuse;

- cyber-bullying
- emotional abuse
- sexting

It isn't known exactly how many children experience online abuse as it can often be hidden from view. We must all be aware of the signs to look out for and how to support our young people.

For further information, visit
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying

The impact of online abuse -

As with any form of abuse, online abuse can have a long-lasting impact on a child's wellbeing.

Research has shown that children who have suffered cyber bullying have also;

- fallen behind at school
- had depression
- suffered with anxiety

Online abuse can feel even more frightening than forms of bullying which happen offline as it can feel like there is no escape.

What to look out for -

Children are at risk of online abuse from people they know as well as strangers. There is no specific age range or 'type' of person who abuses others online.

A child who is experiencing abuse online may;

- have lots of new friends/followers/contacts/numbers on their devices or social media accounts
- be secretive about who they are talking to or what they are doing online
- become withdrawn, upset or outraged when online
- start to spend much more or much less time than usual online

Online abuse can come from visiting age-inappropriate sites. Such content could include; adverts & spam, violent & aggressive behaviours, sexual content and racist information.

When online, children can become involved in harmful interactions such as; aggressive bullying, sexualised requests or contact from 'friends' who attempt to persuade children into harmful activities.

For key findings from the NSPCC, visit; https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/how-safe-are-our-children

Boys & girls may differ in the choices they make online and therefore the types of risks they are exposed to.

Studies show that boys are more likely to give out personal information or meet someone who they have spoken to online.

While girls are more likely to chat online to people they do not know.

Online Resources for Parents

NSPCC

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides

THINK U KNOW .co.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre
www.saferinternet.org.uk

NOS National Online Safety®