



Helena Romanes School - Primary
SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
Autumn 1 2023



Dear Parents and Carers,

Each half term we aim to bring you relevant help and advice on safeguarding issues we feel will be of importance to you. Teaching children how to keep themselves safe is a key part of our curriculum and we develop these skills through PSHE and computing lessons, assemblies and various events and visitors across the year. You will see information at the bottom of the page about who to speak to if you have concerns about a child's safety or welfare. This half term we have also included some additional information about sharing photos online. Please take the time to read this as it will help you to help your children stay safe online.

Wellbeing

As part of our school curriculum we talk to the children about a range of ways they can support their physical and mental wellbeing including exercise, healthy eating, and relaxation techniques. This year, Miss Knowles will also be collaborating with the secondary phase in developing a whole school approach to pupil wellbeing. We are also running a 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' club this half term from 8am-8.50am. Please speak to the office for details.

Photos of Children

During performances and school events, we are delighted to welcome parents and carers to join us to help celebrate the children's achievements. However, we do ask that parents **only post photographs or videos of their own children online** and this is in order to protect vulnerable children who may be part of our school. For these children, it is important that their location is not shared in order to keep them safe. Thank you for your cooperation.



Safeguarding at Helena Romanes School

We are here to help



If you are feeling **sad, upset, hurt** or **worried**, please talk to our team.



Miss Knowles
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education



Mrs Hone
Designated Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education

Supporting children who are feeling anxious

Starting a new school year can be an emotional time for some children and they can sometimes find it difficult to talk about how they are feeling. Here are some ideas to help:

- Talk about emotions regularly so that children understand that everyone experiences a range of different feelings and that it is ok to feel sad or worried sometimes
- Ask open questions that encourage children to talk about how they are feeling or how their day went
- Empathise and show that you accept what they are telling you, rather than just trying to solve the problem

Please also speak to your child's class teacher so we can also support them in school.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about — SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it does come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't completely control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to always meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint. Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they do make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you really want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.



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