



## HSW PARENT/CARER SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Latest advice for Parents and Carers

Term 1 2023

### Tips and advice to help keep your kids safe ONLINE



#### **New Updates on Online Safety (Taken from the Government's overview)**

The Online Safety Bill has been approved by Parliament bringing an end to 3 years of debate and disagreement. All that is left is for the bill to obtain Royal Assent making it law. This newsletter will go through the key parts which **affect children** (taken from a variety of different sources). I hope you all find it useful.

#### **So what difference will the new bill make to online safety?**

##### **It will protect children by making social media platforms:**

- Remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place. This includes removing content promoting self-harm.
- Prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content.
- Enforce age limits and age-checking measures.
- Ensure the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest social media platforms are more transparent, including by publishing risk assessments.
- Provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise.



## **Types of Content that will be tackled:**

The Bill will force social media platforms to remove illegal content, stopping children and adults from seeing it. The Bill is also bringing in new offences, including making content that promotes self-harm illegal for the first time. Platforms will need to remove this.

## **Illegal content that platforms will need to remove includes:**

- child sexual abuse.
- controlling or coercive behaviour.
- extreme sexual violence.
- Fraud.
- hate crime.
- inciting violence.
- illegal immigration and people smuggling.
- promoting or facilitating suicide.
- promoting self-harm.
- revenge porn.
- selling illegal drugs or weapons.
- sexual exploitation.
- Terrorism.

## **Content that is harmful to children:**

Some content is not illegal but could be harmful or age-inappropriate for children. Platforms will need to protect children from it. The categories of harmful content that platforms will need to protect children from encountering are set out in the Bill and include:

- pornographic content.
- content that does not meet a criminal threshold, but which promotes, encourages, or provides instructions for suicide, self-harm or eating disorders.
- content that depicts or encourages serious violence.
- bullying content.

## **Underage children will be kept off social media platforms:**

The online safety laws will mean social media companies will have to keep underage children off their platforms. Social media companies set the age limits on their platforms and many of them say children under 13 years of age are not allowed, but



many younger children have accounts. This will stop. Different technologies can be used to check people's ages online. These are called age assurance technologies. The new laws mean social media companies will have to say what technology they are using, if any, and show they are enforcing their age limits.

### **The Bill will tackle repeat offenders:**

These laws will require all social media companies to assess how their platforms could allow abusers to create anonymous profiles, and take steps to ban repeat offenders, preventing them from creating new accounts and limiting what new or suspicious accounts can do.

### **How the Bill will be enforced?**

Ofcom will be in charge as a regulator to check platforms are protecting their users. Platforms will have to show they have processes in place to meet the requirements set out by the Bill. Ofcom will check how effective those processes are at protecting internet users from harm. Ofcom will have powers to act against companies which do not follow their new duties. Companies will be fined up to £18 million or 10 percent of their annual global turnover, whichever is greater. Criminal action will be taken against senior managers who fail to follow information requests from Ofcom. Ofcom will also be able to hold companies and senior managers (where they are at fault) criminally liable if the provider fails to comply with Ofcom's enforcement notices in relation to specific child safety duties or to child sexual abuse and exploitation on their service. In the most extreme cases, with the agreement of the courts, Ofcom will be able to require payment providers, advertisers, and internet service providers to stop working with a site, preventing it from generating money or being accessed from the UK.

### **How these UK laws impact international companies?**

Ofcom will have the power to take appropriate action against all social media and tech companies, no matter where they are based, if they are accessible to UK users. For further information, please see [this BBC News article](#), [and this Sky News article](#).

You can also listen to a Podcast regarding the Online Safety Bill [via this link](#).



## **How will this affect our teaching of Online Safety in School? (Taken from BrowneJacobson).**

1. For schools, the safeguarding duties are likely to remain the same. The Bill does not remove responsibilities from schools or mean safeguarding children and young people online is put into the hands of the tech companies instead.
2. We've seen the online safety section of Keeping Children Safe in Education grow year on year and when the Bill is passed, we are likely to see further expansion, if not separate guidance.
3. You all know the importance of online safety. We are made aware of the risks, policies cover it and through the curriculum schools teach children and young people about keeping themselves safe online and keeping their data safe, too. Filtering and monitoring systems then provide an additional layer of support and protection.
4. The Bill will not make these approaches redundant; schools will still need to take the lead with online safety, but the Bill should make the platforms take more responsibility too. That can only be a good thing.

