



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

8.5

TIPS TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE SAFETY

FOR PARENTS/CARERS

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FOR ALL

TIPS TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE SAFETY

Guidance to help you be vigilant and supportive of your child(ren)'s online activities

It's likely everyone in your household is spending more time online right now.

Chances are individually or as a family you've accessed apps you hadn't previously known existed. While social networking is proving to be really useful, it's important we all apply the principles of appropriate boundaries online. We'd ask all parents/carers to be particularly vigilant and supportive of children's online activities.

So, please check out the information we have provided for coaches/managers. Specifically, is your child's coach/manager following the protocols in Guidance Notes 6.2, under the headline: **Video calls with children – specific guidance for coaches/managers**? For example, has the coach/manager asked you if your child can participate, have you been involved, do you need to be, does the session involve other players, is this invite from a coach/manager known to you? Where does your child mainly access online content at home?

There are new opportunities springing up online weekly if not daily – would you know if your child has either seen or been invited to access coaching advice/tips by someone that's not already connected to your child's club? There may be some new and helpful opportunities – but don't assume everyone will have thought through the safeguards children need and deserve online.

Children motivated by boredom could start to engage with new groups or individuals and this in turn could make them vulnerable to those looking to groom young people.

Online grooming may be hard for parents /carers to recognise and groomers may specifically warn children not to talk to anyone about it. There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common amongst teens), but look out for increased instances of:

- Wanting to spend more and more time on the internet;
- Being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit;
- Switching screens when you come near the computer, tablet or phone;
- Possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them;
- Using sexual language, that you wouldn't expect them to know;
- Becoming emotionally volatile.

Groomers often target young people by sending out friend requests on popular sites and platforms to see who responds. They may strike up a conversation to build a relationship with a child and ask them to continue the chat privately.

In April 2020, the National Crime Agency (NCA) predicted an increase in online child sexual abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic. The NCA and UK policing arrest more than 500 child sex offenders and safeguard about 700 children each month. To read more click [here](#).

Speak to your child about who they are talking to online and ensure they genuinely know the people with whom they are engaging.

Please also refer to FA Guidance Notes 8.6: 'Grooming – The signs and steps to take if you're worried about a child', which are available [here](#).



If you need further specific help or advice, please go directly to the following sources of expert advice:

UK SAFER INTERNET CENTRE

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>

CEOP*

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

INTERNET MATTERS

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

NETAWARE

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/whatsapp>

PARENTINFO

<https://parentinfo.org/>

THINKUKNOW

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

If you have any concerns relating to someone in football, please talk to your Club Welfare Officer, or report this directly to The FA via safeguarding@TheFA.com

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Heads Up are an FA charity partner, aiming to tackle mental health in and out of the game.

We're all living through extraordinary times, and as a result we're all facing different challenges, stresses and pressures. It's

important to remember that whatever child(ren) going through and however it's making them feel, it's okay to talk about it – everyone reacts differently to different events, and often talking can be an important first step in feeling better.

It's also important to remember that our charity partners and other mental health charities in the UK are here for you and ready to give you and your child(ren) the support and guidance you might need. To find out more about the tips being offered click [here](#).

Childline provides a range of online tools that young people may find helpful:

- **Calm Zone** – activities to help let go of stress;
- **Games** to help take your mind off things;
- **Information and advice** on a range of topics including feelings, relationships, family and schools;
- Peer support [message boards](#);
- **Childline Kids**, a website specifically for under-12s.

Childline can also give confidential help and advice calls to **0800 1111** are free or children can get support online via <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>



*Child Exploitation Online Protection centre



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