

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

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Dear Parents and Carers, This newsletter shares key updates, advice for the Christmas break, and important information about online safety and technology trends among teens.

SUPPORT OVER CHRISTMAS IN BARNSLEY

Service	Details
Barnsley Council Family Support	barnsley.gov.uk/services/family-support
Barnsley Foodbank Partnership	barnsley.foodbank.org.uk
Mind Barnsley	mind.org.uk
Young Minds Parent Helpline	0808 802 5544

CURRENT CONCERNS AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONALLY

Concerns nationally around **online safety, pressure to share images, peer-on-peer issues such as sharing inappropriate images, bullying or coercive behaviour, and substance experimentation**. Please take a moment to talk with your child about staying safe online and choosing positive friendships.

Signs to look out for:

- Secretive phone use
- Sudden mood/behaviour changes
- Unexplained items or money
- Withdrawal or anxiety



Support:

If you have concerns, contact our safeguarding team. Support is also available through **CEOP**, **Childline**, and **Barnsley Children's Social Care** 01226 772423. **South Yorkshire Police (non-emergency)**: 101

If you ever feel a child is at immediate risk, call **999**.

Many young people will be unwrapping new phones, tablets, laptops or gaming devices this Christmas. While this is exciting, it's also a great time to set up safety measures and talk about staying safe online.

Here are some simple steps to help keep your child safe from the moment the device is switched on:

- Go through the initial setup as a family.
- Choose strong passwords and make sure they are not shared with friends.
- Add your own parental controls during setup where possible.

Encourage your child to:

- Only talk to people they know in real life.
- Never share personal information, school details or live location.
- Come to you if they ever feel worried, pressured or uncomfortable online.
- Think before posting, especially pictures, videos or comments.

Remind your child that:

- Once an image is sent, it could be saved, shared or misused.
- It's never OK for someone to pressure them for photos.
- They can always tell a trusted adult if something feels wrong.
- Set age-appropriate content restrictions.
- Turn off voice chat for younger children or limit it to friends only.
- Beware of scams, fake giveaways and in-game purchases.



This time of year is perfect for building healthy digital habits. Setting things up together helps children feel supported and confident and reassures parents that the new device will be enjoyed safely.

Risky Apps	Concerns
Roblox	Predatory chat, fake deals
Kik Messenger	Minimal verification, stranger contact
Ask.fm	Anonymous Q&A, cyberbullying
Yubo, Skout, Badoo	Dating-style misuse
Monkey, Whisper, Omegle	High risk, little moderation
Lemon8	Limited parental controls

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Talk, Don't Just Block** – Open conversations about online safety.
- **Check Privacy Settings** – Enable parental controls where possible.
- **Know the Apps** – Awareness is key; not all apps are equal.
- **Set Boundaries** – Agree on screen time and device-free family time.
- **Watch for Warning Signs** – Sudden secrecy, mood changes, or withdrawal.

