



Digital Parenting

Friday 19th September

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Digital Parenting - Session Agenda



- **Online Safety Act:** How this recent legislation will affect your child's online safety.
- **Family Networking:** an opportunity to mix with other parents from your child's year group to share your experiences as a digital parent and to identify what works and why.
- **Working Together:** Our guidance around how we can work closely together with a clear set of shared Feltonfleet Community recommendations to ensure a consistent approach designed to mitigate the growing complexities of digital parenting and promote a happy, wholesome childhood for your children.



“the safest place in the world to be
online”



Brianna Ghey, a 16 year old transgender girl was murdered in February 2023. Brianna had viewed harmful content online, including material that encouraged eating disorders and self harm. Two teenagers with a 'fascination for violence' planned the killing using a messaging app. One had viewed violent content online.

Molly Russell was a 14 year old girl who took her own life in 2017 after being exposed to a stream of distressing suicide and self-harm content on social media. The inquest highlighted images of self-harm and suicide viewed by Molly "shouldn't have been available for a child to see".



Mia Janin was a 14 year old schoolgirl who tragically took her own life in 2021 after being bullied by boys at her school. Evidence presented at the inquest described a SnapChat group chat run by male pupils at the school that mocked Mia and shared inappropriate images of her.





Parents of Archie Battersbee (12), Isaac Kenevan (13), Maia Walsh (13) and Julian 'Jools' Sweeney (14) believe that their children all died having participated in an online 'blackout challenge' where the person starves themselves of oxygen. The bereaved families have initiated a wrongful death legal challenge.

Frankie Thomas died at home aged 15 in 2018 having viewed explicit self harm material online for several months. An inquest heard that teachers at her school wrongly believed that filters were in place on the equipment used to access the Internet. In fact, the device used had no such protection.



The Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, which investigated the law in the wake of the Southport riots, said Internet users were being exposed to large volumes of harmful and misleading content "which can deceive, damage mental health, normalise extremist views, undermine democracy, and fuel violence".



The Online Safety Act 2023

2017

Originally called the Online Harms Act, started life in the Internet Safety Strategy green paper (2017) and the Online Harms white paper (2019).

2024

New criminal offences come into effect including cyberflashing, epilepsy trolling, and the offence of encouraging or assisting serious self-harm.

2021-2023

Draft Bill introduced in May 2021,
House of Lords: January 2023
Royal Assent granted: 26 October 2023

2025

Online providers have a legal duty to protect children including use of 'highly effective age assurance methods' from 25 July 2025



The Online Safety Act 2023

The Online Safety Act 2023 is a landmark piece of legislation in the UK designed specifically to address illegal and harmful content on the Internet.

Landmark piece of legislation?

- Previously, online platforms operated under a system of "notice and takedown", meaning they were only required to remove illegal content after being notified of its existence. The Online Safety Act changes this by placing a **legal "duty of care"** on these companies.
- The onus now falls upon online content providers to actively:
 - **identify and assess risk**
 - **put systems in place to mitigate actual harm** and evidence their policy and procedures



The Online Safety Act 2023

Online Providers - Risk assessment and harm mitigation

Online providers are now categorised according to their user thresholds and functionality and must adopt new measures including:

- **changing the algorithms** that determine what is shown in children's feeds to filter out harmful content
- implementing **age verification methods**
- **removing harmful content quickly** and supporting children exposed to it
- social media platforms **preventing repeat offenders from accessing their platforms**
- **identifying a named person who is specifically 'accountable** for children's safety'
- **annually reviewing how they are managing risk to children** on their platforms



The Online Safety Act 2023

The Act gives Ofcom, our media (TV, Radio and Internet) regulator, powers of enforcement.

Ofcom has authority to:

- Issue fines up to £18 million or 10% of their annual global turnover.
- Demand tech companies to provide evidence of their safety measures and risk assessments.
- Enforce criminal liability: senior managers could face criminal charges.
- Apply to the courts to block access to services in the UK.



The Online Safety Act 2023

The Act has explicit and robust protections specifically for children.

It requires online services 'likely to be accessed by children' to:

- **Remove and prevent illegal content** - including child sexual abuse material, terrorism content, content promoting self harm.
- **Protect from legal but harmful content** - content that is legal for adults though damaging for young people, i.e. content promoting suicide, self harm, eating disorders. *Also extends to misogynistic content, depictions of serious violence, dangerous stunts / challenges, bullying, abusive or hateful content*
- **Implement age checks** - services must use 'highly effective age assurance methods' to prevent children from accessing age-inappropriate content, particularly social media and pornography.



The Online Safety Act 2023

Section 181: Threatening Communications

Section 181 specifically addresses the actions on individuals, creating a new criminal offence:

- **Sending threatening messages online** - it is now an offence for a person to send a message that conveys a threat of death or serious harm (*serious injury amounting to grievous bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, serious financial loss*).
 - As the age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 years old, a pupil who sends (including forwarding) a message threatening death or serious harm in a case of cyberbullying or online harassment could therefore theoretically be liable for prosecution.



The Online Safety Act 2023

The Responsibility of Schools

- The Act does not place any new duties on schools, with our core safeguarding statutory guidance set out in “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (KCISE), though we all should be conscious of our shared school-wide safeguarding responsibility:
 - Providing education and guidance to identify and critically evaluate the risks and harms of online content and how to behave responsibly and respectfully online*
 - Recognising the severity of any threatening behaviour.
 - Providing support to any victims.
 - Knowing when and how to report.

**Including updated Content category guidance around misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance for schools.*



The Online Safety Act 2023

Does it go far enough?

Some campaigners and charities have called for:

- Stricter rules for tech firms, including banning all under 16s from social media.
- More protection for children around private messaging apps which feature end-to-end encryption
- Banning mobile phones in schools
- Addressing the addictive and compulsive nature of some apps, especially those targeting children
- Active 'screen time' management

Conversely, privacy campaigners have questioned the invasiveness of age verification methods and limits on freedom of speech.



The Online Safety Act 2023

Is it working?

Since coming into law, some social media companies have been found to be blocking posts including debates about the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and parliamentary debates on grooming gangs.

Some experts have warned that companies are risking stifling public debate by invoking age assurance checks, whilst others suggest that this will improve as the law beds in ...

Due to local laws, we are temporarily restricting access to this content until X estimates your age. [Learn more](#)

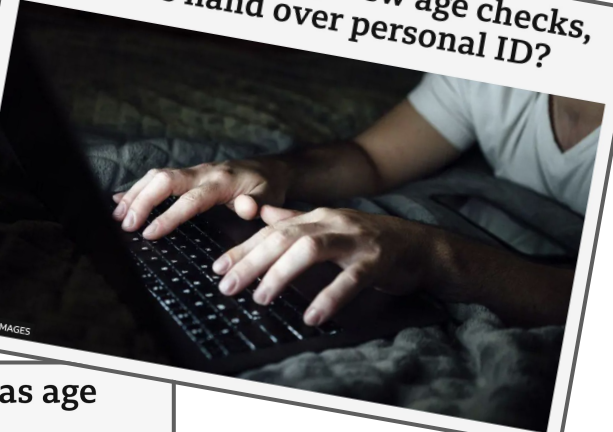
9:53 PM · Jul 19, 2025 · **7,460** Views

Wikipedia loses challenge against Online Safety Act verification rules

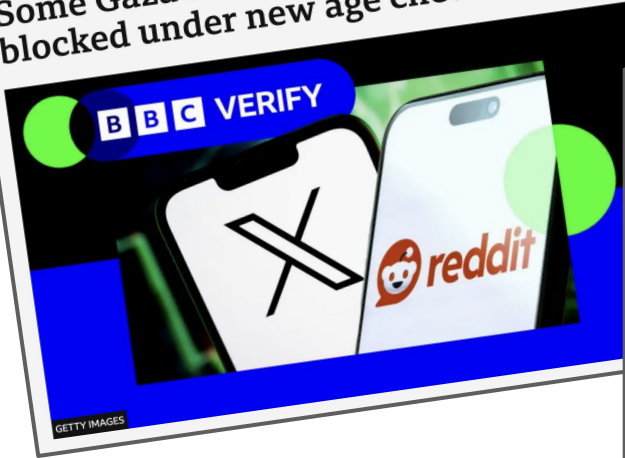


Expect the Act to remain in the news for the foreseeable future ...

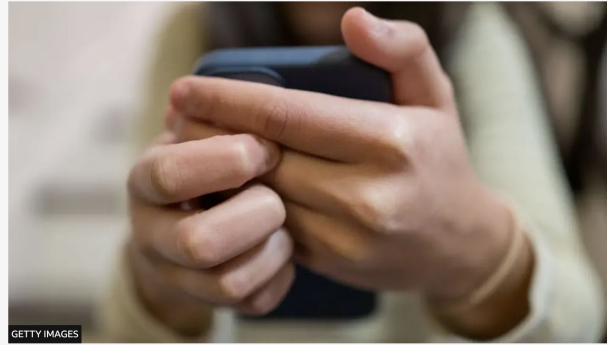
As porn sites apply new age checks, will users hand over personal ID?



Some Gaza and Ukraine posts blocked under new age checks



VPNs top download charts as age verification law kicks in



Family Networking - 20 minutes



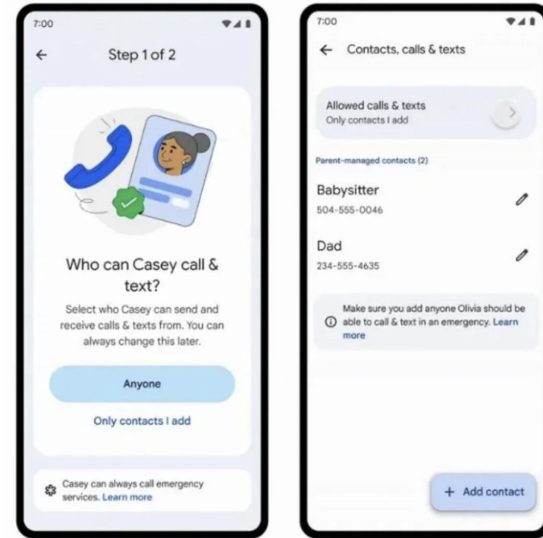
- What devices are in your home?
- What is your child's relationship with digital devices like?
- What successful digital parenting measures are you currently using?
- Are there any existing points of tension between you and your children relating to their digital devices?



A solid knowledge base

Know how to:

- Enable and manage your Internet filtering settings to block harmful content.
- Create child accounts for your children requiring permission to download and install apps.
 - All social media (including YouTube) and 1:1 messaging apps are not designed for <13 years of age.
- Manage screen time levels and other access permissions using device settings or tools like Google Family Link and Microsoft Family Safety.



Filtering Inappropriate Content

Apply age-appropriate consistent boundaries.

Set clear non-negotiable boundaries:

- No devices stored in bedrooms.
- No recreational screen-time on school nights.
- Use app store, Pan European Game Information (PEGI) ratings and British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) ratings to manage access to content.
- Use parent review and ratings sites like Common Sense Media to help steer your decisions.
- Set age appropriate recreational screen-time limits for weekends.



Boundaries

Graduated levels of vigilance and supervision.

- Devices in family areas only.
- Monitor online search history.
- Check your parental control settings regularly.
- Who is in your child's contacts?
- Check the privacy, security and location settings for any apps or accounts used.

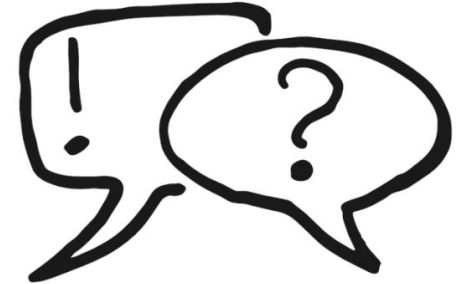


Monitoring

Open ongoing communication between you and your children.



- What digital issues have you discussed with your children recently?
 - Should <16s have mobile phones?
 - Should social media be for over 16s only?
 - Is this news article fake?
 - How would I know if this is AI generated or an authentic image?
 - Is it a good idea to enable location sharing in SnapChat?
 - What is the perfect 'digital diet'?



Communication and Critical Thinking

Mindful role-modelling of healthy digital use.

- How might your own digital habits model healthy use? Are there any habits that you might need to tweak?
- What does your own use of Social Media look like to your child: liking, posting, consent, sharing, blocking, privacy
- What are your own levels of screen time like?
- How regularly do you ring-fence mealtimes, family movies and other shared times as 'technology free' times?



Education and Role-Modelling