

Thursday 8th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to advise you of a guide published just before the Christmas break, [What I wish my parents or carers knew...A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives](#).

Supporting children's safety is a shared responsibility between families, schools, and wider society. For parents and carers, this has become increasingly complex as children's lives are now deeply connected to the digital world. Many families face challenging decisions about how to balance protecting children from online harm with enabling access to spaces that are central to learning, socialising, and play.

This guide takes a different approach, recognising the rapidly evolving digital landscape that children – and parents – navigate daily. It focuses on managing children's everyday online habits and was developed with direct input from children across England. The Children's Commissioner's office spoke to teenagers, Youth Ambassadors, and the Youth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Panel to understand what works – and what doesn't – in supporting children online.

When asked what they would do differently with hindsight, many children said they would delay giving a smartphone to their own teenager. Almost unanimously, they wanted to be protected from it for as long as possible.

As educators, we play a vital role in supporting parents and carers with these challenges. Children have told us they value firm, informed, and protective boundaries when adults have concerns about the content they are accessing online. As parents, carers, and educators, our shared responsibility begins and ends with children's care and safety. One young person summed it up perfectly:

"Don't be afraid to be firm... If you are worried that your child is seeing harmful content and you don't know what they're watching and it's affecting their behaviour, just take it that you know best – they don't."

I hope you find this guide useful and encourage you to share it where appropriate.

Kind regards,



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