



MME/bg

November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

## Do you know what your child is doing online?

Summary of action(s) required	Deadline
<p><b>Check your child's smartphone, including all their social media accounts, WhatsApp, and text messages.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure you have robust controls in place, to filter and monitor their use. (links on how to do this are below).</b></p>	<p><b>As soon as possible.</b></p>

I want to make you aware that the college has been involved in supporting students and their families with several serious safeguarding incidents, involving the use of smartphones and social media. Recently, some of our parents checked their child's phones and have been incredibly shocked to find evidence of some concerning issues. These have included videos of risk-taking and anti-social behaviour in the wider community. We have also had to support students and families after finding evidence that their child has been exploited over social media platforms to produce and share explicit videos and photographs. The police are investigating this issue.

We are also aware, that some students are accessing harmful content which is influencing their worldview and how they behave, toward each other. Unfortunately, the content by an online influencer, Andrew Tate is being quoted amongst students. Below is a link to some more specific advice: [Harmful Content - Andrew Tate - Safer Schools NI](#)

To mitigate the risks associated with the online world, we urge you all to routinely check your child's smartphone, including all social media applications and regularly talk to your child about what they are doing online. If you find anything concerning, or would like to talk further about this issue, please do contact [enquiries@bottishamvc.org](mailto:enquiries@bottishamvc.org). Please also contact us if you believe another child is at risk of harm.

It is essential, that all parents and carers ensure that smart devices have appropriate controls and filters in place, to protect children from harmful content, grooming, and exploitation. We have included some links below, to provide advice and guidance on these issues and how to support and monitor your child's internet and smartphone use.

## What is sexting and the law?

This page provides information on the law relating to child sexting or sharing indecent images or texts of children and contains advice on what to do if your child has been involved in sexting. <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/sexting/>



# Bottisham Village College

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## NSPCC – Sharing Nudes

Advice from the NSPCC about sharing 'nudes and semi nudes'. [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes | NSPCC](#)

## CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection

Report online sexual abuse, or for additional advice and support [CEOP Safety Centre](#)

## Setting up controls

When setting up an iPhone or Android device for a child, they will need either an iCloud account or a Google account. Please ensure this has been set up with their correct date of birth. By doing this, the device will put in place additional protection and will prompt parents to link to their accounts, so controls and supervision can be managed by them. Below is a video to show you how to set up parental controls on an Apple device.

## How to set up parental controls on an iPhone or iPad

[How to Set Up Parental Controls on iPhone or iPad - YouTube](#)

There are some additional applications, which can be paid for which have additional features and protection. Please follow the link to the U Switch guide.

[How to keep your child safe on their smartphone – the definitive guide \(uswitch.com\)](#)

## Only Fans

'Only Fans' is an online platform, created in the UK. It is free to join either as a user or creator, but creators monetise their content by charging subscription fees for users to view it. This content can take the form of photos, videos, live streams, and one-to-one chats. In many cases users are required to pay extra for any additional content they would like to access. The site has around 50 million users worldwide and is aimed squarely at an adult audience. Below is an information bulletin about this application, which explains the risks.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr D Fullman**  
Deputy Principal



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At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on a platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# ONLYFANS

18+

OnlyFans is an online platform, created in the UK. It is free to join either as a user or creator, but creators monetise their content by charging subscription fees for users to view it. This content can take the form of photos, videos, live streams and one-to-one chats. In many cases, users are also required to pay for any additional content they would like to access. The site has around 50 million users worldwide and is aimed squarely at an adult audience.

### Falsified Profiles

OnlyFans asks users to provide personal information, a 'selfie' and a copy of their ID to verify their age. However, in 2020, a BBC documentary found evidence of under-18s building profiles on the platform by using forged documents or other people's ID. Payment information is also required to activate an account – but an under-age user could simply input someone else's bank details.

### Explicit Content

Although it hosts various types of content creators (chefs, fitness trainers, artists and so on), OnlyFans has developed a particular reputation for showcasing adult material. Even if a young person on the platform is not selling explicit content of themselves, it's likely they will be exposed to profiles that are – and they may even come under pressure to do so from older users of the app.

### Potential Financial Costs

OnlyFans is subscription based, raising the risk of racking up sizeable costs very quickly. When a user clicks 'follow' on an account they want to subscribe to, their debit or credit card is charged. Subscriptions are non-refundable and set to auto-renew as default. Many accounts labelled as 'free' still encourage users to donate tips for content they've liked.



### Online Grooming

Due to the platform's commercial nature, there is the potential that young people may be offered money by other users to create specific content. This represents an increased possibility of young content creators being put at risk. If the requests are for explicit photos or videos, a content maker who is under 18 would therefore be producing their own child abuse material.

### Risk Taking

In trying to produce the 'right' content or fit in with other OnlyFans users, young people may be more susceptible to taking chances with the material that they upload. Adolescents are more inclined to take risks as they develop their identities and seek approval in their peer groups. Online, this tendency may lead them into producing content that they would not normally consider making.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### Maintain a Dialogue

It can help to talk honestly with your child about the dangers of using adult platforms such as OnlyFans. Discuss the types of content that they feel is appropriate (or not) to post online and the potential consequences of sharing too many images, too much information and – especially – explicit photos or videos.

### Parental Controls

Ensure that you implement adequate safety measures on your child's phone and other devices – especially parental control settings. Depending on the device, age-inappropriate websites, content and downloads can be filtered by age rating and blocked.

### Monitor Their Finances

This is particularly relevant for teens with their own bank account. If you notice a drastic change in spending habits or your child suddenly has more disposable income or high-value items (like designer clothes or new gadgets) that you did not think they could afford, then you may need to initiate a discussion about how they obtained this money.

### Discuss Strangers on the Internet

Highlight to your child the dangers of meeting people they might have engaged with through a platform like OnlyFans. Make sure they know to inform a trusted adult straight away if someone they have only spoken to online attempts to persuade them to meet up in real life.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Rina Bajaj is a Counselling Psychologist who has worked in mental health since 2004 (for the NHS, statutory organisations, in the corporate world and the voluntary sector). Her areas of specialism include dating and relationships counselling, and she has diverse experience in helping people from a range of backgrounds.



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