FACT SHEET: E- Safety

Digital and interactive technology use is widely available and used for education, communication and entertainment. It is also used by people will ill intent to groom, abuse and bully users including children. In view of the risks everyone has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people by preventing the opportunities for abuse and reporting any concerns promptly.

Digital and Interactive Technology - areas of concern

The effects of abuse suffered by children and young people via digital technology are the same as if they had been abused by personal contact and can occur through:

- Access to the internet and websites, including social networking websites, on computers, games consoles and mobile phones
- The use of webcams and mobile phone cameras, which feature frequently in online abuse
- Cyber bullying which can affect children, young people and adults and is often carried out through social networks and mobile phones.
- Being groomed by other online users posing as 'friends' including setting up meetings, and sometimes by making threats to expose the child in some way
- Abusers posting images of the abuse and victims online, usually for financial gain, and the double impact of the abuse.

Reporting concerns

When there are concerns that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm or that an offence is being committed, a telephone referral must be made to Children's Social Care immediately.

If the concerns are about a Child in Need or with additional needs, but there is no risk of significant harm, then the referral should be made to the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) in the area where the child lives.

If the concerns are about illegal websites, cyber bullying or commercial exploitation but there is no known child at risk then a report to the South Yorkshire Police, Safer Neighbourhood team should be made.

Minimising Risks

- All children and young people must be informed of and supported to understand that they should not give out personal information to anyone they do not know or trust.
- Help to use the privacy settings on social networks and gaming sites should be provided.
- All meetings alone with someone contacted through the internet should be avoided.
- Educating children in the safe use of the internet is the responsibility of all practitioners in contact with children and young people
- Raising awareness of E-safety among parents and carers so that they can support and guide their children to use the technology safely.

Acceptable use policies in all establishments

All agencies and establishments working with children and young people such as schools, Children's Centres, nurseries, residential settings, Foster care should have policies in place to ensure the safe use of the internet and digital technologies such as mobile phones .

The Regional Broadband Consortium, the Yorkshire and Humber Grid for Learning, provides a level of filtering agreed with the Local Authorities and Schools for example.

For further details about all policies and procedures related to digital and interactive technology and E-Safety see **chapter 3.8** in the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures.