# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

## 11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Welcome back everyone to the new academic year. Also, a very warm welcome to all our new families who have joined us this year. We hope you and your child/young person will be very happy at Ellen Tinkham. It has been a great start to the term. The pupils arrived back in school with a spring in their step and it's been great having them back.

Our Sixth Form department has moved into Building One at the Hollow Lane site and the team have worked so hard to get it ready. We look forward to seeing how the space develops over time and hope that they will all be happy there.

The Autumn Term is long and busy, and is always one of my favourites. This term we will be continuing to work tirelessly to ensure all our children and young people get the very best educational experience possible.

The partnership between families and school is so important. If there is anything you are not clear about or require further information, please do get in touch so that we can support in any way. Please share your views and comments with Katy Bradley, Head of Lower School or Monika Davis, Head of Upper School.

We have Parents & Carers' Evening next week and your Class Teacher will share with you plans for this term and the coming academic year. And if you want to find out more about what your child is learning this term, please log onto Jotter.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

## CONTENTS INCLUDE ...

**Road Closures near ETC and Public Exhibition** - details for the DCC website and exhibitions.

**Circus Starr** - tickets available from Reception on a first come, first served basis.

**Work Experience** - could you offer our students a session at your workplace for 2 hours a week? Please call Luke on 01392 467168.

**School Lunches** - costs enclosed and also ways to pay.

## WHAT'S COMING UP

Parents' Evenings - Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September

October half term - week commencing 23rd October 2023

Occasional Day (school closed) - Monday 27th November 2023

**Heavitree and Whipton Active Streets Trial -** Around the local Exeter area, the Council has put into place various bus gates on selected roads, and also blocked through traffic in order to make the spaces safer for pedestrians, bicycles etc.

A couple of these closures/bus gates affect roads very close to the College.

Full details of the changes can be found [here](#).

There are two public exhibitions coming up:

- On 12 September at Whipton Community Hall, Pinhoe Road, EX4 8AF, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm
- On 14 September at St Mark's Church Hall, Pinhoe Road, EX4 7HU, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

The events will be attended by representatives of Devon County Council, who will be on hand to answer questions and listen to feedback regarding the changes. Paper copies of the consultation form will be provided.

If you would like to find out more, please see the website or have your say at one of the public exhibitions. Thank you.
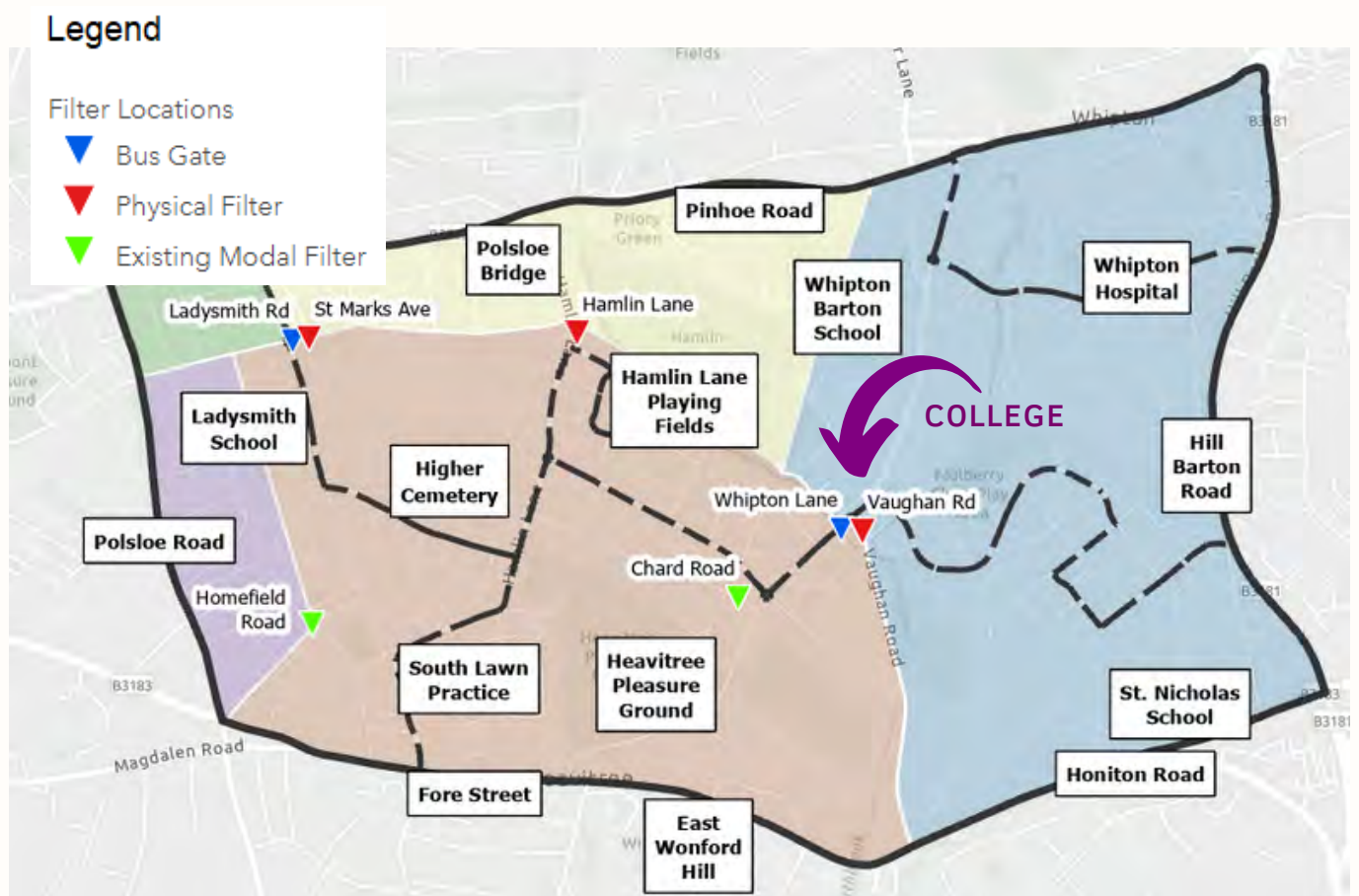
**Circus Starr** - The circus is coming to town!  Exeter Corn Exchange is hosting Circus Starr on Wednesday 20th September for two performances.  One at 4.45pm and the second at 7 pm.  We have 25 tickets for each show - first come first served so if you'd like tickets, please contact Sharon in the School Office and we'll send them home.  There is a sensory story you can download before the performance.  See below.



facebook.com/circusstarr
@CircusStarr
CircusStarrCIC

Post your ticket pictures!

Send us your feedback!

Share your excitement for

**Circus Starr**
the circus with a purpose.

Share your Starr selfies!

If you would like to share your experience with our business supporters please let us know, call *01260 288690* or email *community@circus-starr.org.uk*

**The Circus Starr Sensory Story**

We have very proudly collaborated with Joanna Grace of *The Sensory Projects* to enhance our sensory accessibility, and produce The Circus Starr Sensory Story and pack.

Our story incorporates sensations that you will feel when you visit our show, helping you know exactly what sensory changes to expect when attending our magical event.

*"I loved the sensory story! It allowed us to help Jessica anticipate what would be happening and prepare."* Kerry, Mum.

The pack contains resources that support each step of the story, from stickers to cellophane!

**Order your FREE pack today!!!**

Visit www.circus-starr.org.uk/sensorystory

Registered company No. 07477542

**Circus Starr**, Dane Mill, Broadhurst Lane, Congleton. CW12 1LA

**Circus Starr**
the circus with a purpose.

**Work Experience** - Do you own or work at an organisation that would be willing to host a few of our students on work experience?  We are seeking new placements this year and would be interested to hear from you if you can offer one shift a week, up to 2 hours at a time.  All visits will be fully supported by staff so there is no need for constant supervision by yourselves.  All we ask if that there is a small end of placement evaluation detailing any successes during the work experience.  Please call Luke on 01392 467168 if you want to find out more.  Thank you.

**Sickness Policy** - Attached is the revised Sickness Policy which we would ask that you kindly read.  A copy will also be made available on our website.  Also attached is a quick summary of common childhood illnesses, when your child should remain at home and for how long (as a minimum).

If your child becomes unwell at school or college, we carefully consider the welfare of your child before making the decision to call you to collect. This decision is not taken lightly as we appreciate their education is very important and pupils should be in school as much as possible.

https://qrco.de/minfec

If your child has been poorly, please ensure they are well enough to participate in activities across a full school day before returning.  Please also consider the wellbeing of other pupils and staff in the classroom - we need to keep our classrooms as "bug free" as possible.  Thank you for your consideration.

**Exmouth Tigers Disability Football Club -** Exmouth Tigers has 3 teams (2 male and 1 female) who play in the Devon Ability Counts League in tournaments from Sept to April.  They train on Saturday Mornings from 9am to 10.30am at Exmouth Rugby Club. They charge no signing on fees, no match fees and provide all kit. All they ask is a small donation towards transport costs for the tournaments.

All their players are either neurodiverse, have disabilities or suffer with their mental health.  They are looking for new players aged 16+ both male and female.  Want to know more?  See below.



EXMOUTH TIGERS
Disability Football Club

Training restarts Sat 19th Aug 23 9am at Exmouth Rugby Club!

Do you play football or want to learn?
*Are you aged 16+?
*Do you have any form of disability, long term mental health condition or are you deaf?
If you answer yes to the above then come and join us!
We have 3 teams (2 men and 1 ladies) who play in the Devon Ability Counts League

• Contact Tigers Manager Paul Baldwin on 07866270213 or paul@exmouthgateway.co.uk or visit our website – www.exmouthgateway.co.uk

**Champions for Change** - Did you know that across the Federation, we have students involved in Devon's Champions for Change?

The Champions for Change network provides a range of ways for SEND children and young people to have their say on SEND. Last term:



- the Champions heard from 60 young people who attend special schools as part of the Raising Aspirations of Employment project. This project aims to enable more young people from special schools to have the opportunity of a paid job after leaving school.

- The Impacts group for young people aged 12-26 now have a dedicated space within the council offices and are developing a co-working agreement with and for professionals.
- The Echoes group for children in mainstream schools have been looking at how school councils are elected so children with SEND are more adequately represented. A new Echoes group will be starting in Mid-Devon this term.



**School Lunches** - Below are the school lunch costs for this term:

**JUNIOR**= Daily £2.60 Weekly £13.00 1st half term (32 days) £83.20 2nd half term (34 days) £88.40   Full term £171.60

**SENIOR** = Daily £2.70 Weekly £13.50 1st half term (32 days) £86.40 2nd half term (34 days) £91.80   Full term £178.20

All school meals are paid in advance. Please pay online at www.schoolgateway.com or send cash or a cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to **Devon County Council**.

**School Gateway -** We recommend you sign up for School Gateway to pay for lunches, trips etc. It is really easy to do.

### Getting started

You will need to register for a School Gateway account at www.schoolgateway.com. Enter the email address and mobile number we have on record for you. If you are not sure we have up-to-date details for you please contact the school office, if we do not have your email address it won't work.

When you have entered your email address and mobile number, select the Send PIN button, a PIN number will be sent by text message to your mobile phone. You can then use this PIN number to log into the School Gateway and view / make payments.

Once you have set up your account, install the 'School Gateway' app for quicker more convenient payments on the go. Go to the app store and search for School Gateway, download, open up and use your log in details as you would on the computer/tablet... and away you go!

### Payment requests

When you need to make a payment to school simply log in using your email address and your PIN number, select the payment request(s) you wish to fulfil and follow the Wizard through to pay.

### Convenient

School Gateway removes the need to send money into school with your child, removing the chance of money going astray, making it convenient for you to pay when it suits you, from anywhere at any time of day or night.

You can see a record of the payments that you've made and receipts are sent to your registered email address for all transactions you make.



**Schoolgateway**    Keeping up with what's going on at school is easier than ever

**Parents' Evening -** For all families except our Reception starters and parents & carers in Bees, Lilac and Blue, we are offering two dates for Parents' Evening this term:

Tuesday 19th September in person, and
Wednesday 20th September via Teams or a phone call.

A letter will be sent home very shortly for you to book a slot.

On the Tuesday, we are running a cafe and displaying some of the great work our students have produced as well as giving you the opportunity to speak with Senior Leaders.  After this, you can make your way to the classroom to see the Class Teacher for your 15 minute appointment.

Unfortunately we are unable to offer a creche service but you are more than welcome to bring your children with you, if convenient.

On the Wednesday, we are offering a 15 minute Teams meeting or phone call with the Class Teacher.

Once received, please return your letter to your Class Teacher with your preference for a date and time.  Thank you.

For our new Reception starters, your Parents' Evening will be later in the term (date tbc).  For Bees, Lilac and Blue classes, specific letters will be sent home detailing when your Parents' Evenings will take place this term.  Thank you.

**Termly Newsletters** - The newsletter telling you about the topics and learning for this term will be sent home by the end of September.  If there are any notable days of the week for activities ie swimming on a Tuesday, rural skills on a Wednesday, we'll let you know.  It is always good, especially for our younger pupils, to keep a change of clothes in school just in case.  And if you would be willing to donate any waterproof coats or all-in-one waterproofs that your child has grown out of, we would be most grateful to receive them!  Thank you!

# SICKNESS POLICY

We recognise our responsibility to promote a learning environment that is safe and healthy for all. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment this policy provides guidance for staff and parents as to when students should or should not be in school if showing signs of sickness. The health and well-being of all students is of paramount importance to enable them to be successful learners in everything they do.

The purpose of this policy is to:

• To ensure that sick children are appropriately and correctly identified.

• To ensure sick children are cared for appropriately.

• To protect children and adults from preventable infection.

• To enable staff and parents to be clear about the requirements and procedures when children are unwell.

**The school has not got any facilities to look after students who are sick.**

**It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to collect their student promptly, if they are unwell during the school day.** Parents are asked to ensure the school has a contact number where they can be reached in emergencies.

Students should not be brought to school if they are displaying signs of illness. If students do come into school and staff feel that they are unfit for school, parents/carers/emergency contacts will be contacted and requested to come and collect their child and requested not to return their child to school until symptom free.

If a student is thought to be unwell while at school they will be seen by the school nurse, nursing assistant or in their absence by a member of SLT, as the condition of the child needs to be assessed. This will be done in a kind and caring manner. The child may be distressed, so it is important to be calm and reassuring. The Head of School will be informed of any sick students.

**Reasons students will be asked to be collected from school due to illness/medical condition or why students should be kept at home:**

- Following a hospital admission for surgery or illness, please check with the therapy / Medical team for advice, as some operations will need longer recovery periods than others.

- If a student has a temperature of 38°C and above.

- A student who is needing regular paracetamol throughout the day should be kept at home until well.

- Coughs and colds do not normally require the student to be absent from school but this depends on the severity and how the student is able to cope with the school routine. Students who have colds which are obviously 'streaming' and they look unwell and are unable to participate in lessons.

- Students who have diarrhoea and vomiting.  Parents must keep their child home for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea and can only return to school providing they are well enough.  Students will not be able to swim for the 2 weeks following this episode. We understand that some children/young people may take medication for constipation. Please ensure that staff are made aware if this is the case. If your child/young person requires medication as part of a disimpaction plan, this should be carried out at home.

- During the first 48 hours of antibiotic treatment.  A form will be sent home for parents to sign before antibiotics can be given in school and will only be given if stated 4 times a day.

- If a student has an infection which can spread easily – refer to following: Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Students with infectious or contagious diseases will not be permitted to attend for certain periods( see appendix)  If staff suspect that a student has an infectious or contagious disease they will request that parents/carers consult a doctor before returning their child to school and the school may seek advice from the Health Protection Agency

- Post op anaesthetic or sedation e.g. dental extraction, day case; your child needs to stay at home for 24 hours.

- If a student's asthma is flaring up and they are not responding to their inhalers.

- Following a seizure when rescue medicine has been given or it is known that a prolonged recovery period will be needed – If pupils are going to be unable to access education following a seizure and recovery they will need to be collected.

We understand the needs of working parents and do not aim to exclude students from school unnecessarily. In the event of a student having a condition where some of the above might be considered 'routine' or a side effect of their condition an agreement will be put in place in consultation with medical professionals to allow a pupil to remain in school when they would otherwise be collected.

The final decision on whether a pupil may remain at school rests with the Head of School/College who will consider not only the impact on the individual student but also on the welfare and education of other students.

Any medicines given in school, including paracetamol and ibuprofen will be given in accordance with the schools supporting students with medical conditions policy.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
# SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it *does* come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

## INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't *completely* control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

## REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

## MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

## ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

## PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to *always* meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

## IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.

#backtoschool

# Advice for Parents & Carers

## REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they *do* make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

## CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

## CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you *really* want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

## THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

## Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
# THREADS

**AGE RESTRICTION**

**12+**

However, Threads' reliance on an Instagram login effectively makes it 13+

Threads is currently the number one trending social media app. Developed by Meta, the company behind Instagram and Facebook, Threads is a clear rival of Twitter (now known as X) in that it's a text-based conversation platform which allows posts of up to 500 characters, with the option to include links, photos and short videos. Threads is connected to a user's existing Instagram account, which lets people get started on this new app straight away: their followers and favourite creators will be imported from Instagram to their freshly created Threads account.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### DIFFERING OPINIONS

Meta claim they will encourage friendly, positive engagements but haven't specified how they plan to moderate this. As we have already seen on the likes of Twitter, Facebook and so forth, any app where users can talk freely about topics meaningful to them also contains the possibility of offence being caused or hatred being spread.

### ENDLESS SCROLLING

Threads doesn't currently have the facility to search for content – only for other users. Someone's feed, therefore, is made up of either threads from people they follow or content that Meta's algorithms have recommended. This could result in users absent-mindedly scrolling for long periods of time through nothing of particular interest, simply in search of that feeling of connectedness.

### ACCOUNT DELETION IS COMPLEX

As Threads is linked to a user's Instagram account, it's comparatively tricky for someone to completely remove their Threads profile without automatically deleting their Instagram as well. Most 'Insta' users, having spent considerable time building up a bank of posts and followers, will absolutely not want to lose them and could therefore feel pressured into keeping their Threads account active.

### OPEN NETWORKING PROTOCOLS

Reportedly, Meta's plan is for Threads to be compatible with ActivityPub, which will allow users to connect and share content more easily across different apps. If your Threads account is set to 'public', therefore, your posts would be accessible from other linked apps. What's more, people using these compatible apps would be able to interact with Threads users without needing an account.

### DATA COLLECTION

In Threads' privacy policy, Meta states that certain data about users will be collected and linked to that person's identity, including details relating to (among other things) health and fitness, financial information, browsing history, usage data, purchases, location and contacts. This can paint a very detailed picture of a person's life, and Meta does not explain why it needs all this information.

### POTENTIAL FOR EXCESSIVE TRACKING

Its tracking of every interaction, engagement and activity gives the impression of Threads being a sophisticated data-collection tool. There are no adverts on the platform right now, but – given the sheer volume of information being gathered *and* Meta's history of selling data for advertising purposes – it may not be long before ads start appearing on young people's Threads feeds.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### READ THE SMALL PRINT

Privacy policies for apps are usually long and probably the last thing young people read (if at all) when signing up for a trending new platform. However, we'd advise parents and carers to take time to look through Threads' policy and see if they agree with their child's data being collected. Think critically about why Meta needs all that personal information, where it goes and what's done with it.

### FILTER OUT OFFENSIVE WORDS

Like Instagram, Threads has an option to hide replies that contain offensive words, phrases or emojis. These are predetermined by Meta, but you can also customise the list with terms that you deem offensive or which you don't want your child to read. Usefully, there's a crossover between the two apps, so words that you select to screen out on Instagram will also be hidden on Threads.

### HIDE THE LIKES COUNT

Research has shown that young users often feel anxiety over how many likes they receive for their social media posts – and question whether this reflects their real-world popularity. Through the settings menu, Threads allows users to hide the likes count on their (and others') posts. While your child's posts won't display an exact number of likes, they'll still be able to see who *did* like their post.

### GO PRIVATE, AND STAY ALERT

Even if your child's Instagram account is already set to private, they'll need to select this option again in Threads (it's one of the first things the app asks at sign up). You can also edit who can mention them in a comment. Try to keep a regular eye on your child's account: as Threads' popularity and number of features increases, so will opportunities for potentially harmful content to slip through the net.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# DATA BACKUPS AND STORAGE

Making backup copies of files and other content is very useful for avoiding issues (such as hardware failure, software problems or accidental deletion) that could cause the loss of important information or treasured images and videos. While backing up files is considered good practice, it's also essential for adults and children alike to stay aware of the risks which can potentially result from saving these extra copies of your info – particularly if your additional backup versions use cloud storage services.

## BACKUP BASICS

Consider how valuable different types of files are – and what the impact would be if they were lost. Family photos and videos might be irreplaceable, for example, whereas emails to friends tend to be less important. This thought process can help you decide what to back up.

For your most indispensable files, follow 'the 3-2-1 rule': keep **3** backups of your data (your original plus two copies) using **2** different media (such a USB flash, cloud storage or a hard disk drive) with **1** copy held in a physically separate location. This reduces the chance of a single event meaning that your files aren't recoverable from _any_ of these backups.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

## DISAGREEABLE DUPLICATES

Because we tend to back files up in groups rather than individually, it's very easy for some content to get inadvertently swept up in the saving process – creating a duplicate that we aren't aware exists. If this were to include the unintentional backup of malware files, it would mean when we recover our data from the backup, we're also restoring the harmful malware to our computer, phone or tablet.

## HIDDEN IN THE CLOUD

It's not unknown for children and young people to make use of cloud backup services to effectively 'hide' content that they know their parents and carers wouldn't approve of (such as something age inappropriate, for example). They can then delete the content from their device, safe in the knowledge that they can easily retrieve it from the cloud at a more convenient moment.

## THE WEAKEST LINK

If any of our backups are insecure, then – in the event of a breach – the entirety of our data might become accessible to cyber criminals or other malicious individuals. Cyber criminals are aware that, by default, backups tend to contain important or valuable files that people want to keep safe – which makes them a popular (and potentially lucrative) target for cyber-attacks.

## RANDOM RECOVERIES

When restoring data from one of our backups, we may find that some data is recovered which we hadn't even realised had been backed up. This doesn't necessarily sound like a huge drawback – but it could potentially cause a problem if the files were sensitive or personal in nature and then (without us realising) suddenly become available on our devices, where others might see them.

# Advice for Parents & Carers

## BE ORGANISED

Try to keep on top of what backups you and your children have in place – including where your files are saved (to the cloud or an external storage device, for instance) and how they can be accessed. It can also be helpful to stay aware of what data _isn't_ being backed up, which could save you the time and the stress of looking for something in your backup that was never actually there.

## KEEP THINGS TIDY

Where possible, curate your backups by learning how to add or remove content selectively. The former will save you from having to carry out a complete backup on every occasion (which can be time consuming), while being able to prune individual files can be extremely useful if a small number of unwanted – or possibly sensitive – items have been copied over and saved accidentally.

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Find out how to recover files and information from backups until you're fully confident with the process. You could help your child practice with their own (or less essential) files, so they're able to restore items to their device if they need to. It's intensely frustrating knowing that your (or your child's) important files or cherished photo albums are there somewhere, but you can't get to them.

## SCRUTINISE YOUR SECURITY

It sounds like obvious advice, but it's absolutely vital: ensure that your backups are secure. This includes appropriate technical measures – like encryption, strong passwords and multifactor authentication – and, where possible, physical security to prevent the media being stolen. If you're backing up to a hard drive or an external storage device, you should ideally use password protection.

## Meet Our Expert

Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that adults and children alike become more aware of the risks associated with technology, as well as the many benefits.

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
# ONLINE FINANCIAL SCAMS & EXPLOITATION

To date, nearly 43 million UK internet users have encountered a financial scam online; roughly 20% of those victims wound up at least £1,000 out of pocket as a result. The number of con artists plying their trade in the digital world has grown in recent years (a worrying trend which, unfortunately, appears likely to continue), and their methods have become increasingly creative. It can, therefore, be difficult to recognise an online financial scam – let alone to safeguard our children against them – but it's not impossible. Our guide offers a few pointers on what to look out for.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### PHISHING SCAMS

Scammers often use deception to obtain personal and financial information from their target. They might pose as legitimate organisations, such as pretending to be HMRC and threatening legal action for unpaid tax unless the victim provides their National Insurance number. Their efforts have been getting more convincing recently, so be mindful of any unexpected or unusual emails.

### IDENTITY THEFT

Criminals can manipulate someone into providing personal data, then use it to assume their identity online and commit fraud, make unauthorised purchases or engage in other illegal activities. Identity theft can be accomplished by tricking victims into downloading malware that scans their device for information; by figuring out passwords to social media accounts; or through phishing scams.

### FRAUDULENT INVESTMENTS

Fraudsters might lure victims into offering their hard-earned cash for a "one-of-a-kind investment opportunity" promising high returns or quick profits – such as the many cryptocurrency scams currently circulating online. Some unscrupulous influencers have even used their status to tempt their followers into paying for courses which promise to help them become rich and more attractive.

### DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING

Many online sellers use false or misleading advertising to persuade consumers to spend money or supply personal information. Certain websites, for instance, have become notorious for using attractive images to advertise their products, promising to deliver an item for a fraction of its usual price – only for a cheaper-looking, poor-quality reproduction to arrive in the post instead.

### SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

Scammers use social media to manipulate or deceive victims, often by posing as a popular influencer and exploiting their audience – such as posting a link to a 'giveaway' which actually siphons money or personal data to whoever is behind this false identity. This type of scammer commonly impersonates influencers with a younger fan-base, as children tend to make more naive targets.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### EDUCATE YOUR CHILD

Talk to your child about the risks of online financial scams and encourage open communication about their digital activities. Make sure they know the kind of ruses that are out there, and what to look out for when encountering a potential scam. Foster their critical thinking skills – and emphasise that if something they see on the internet seems too good to be true, then it probably is.

### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Almost all devices that children typically use to access the internet have built-in safeguards like parental controls and monitoring tools. Stay aware of the options available to you, and make use of them to shield your child from possible exploitation as best as you can. This, combined with common sense and critical thinking, should go a long way towards keeping them safe.

### STAY INFORMED

Try to keep your knowledge of current and emerging scams in the digital world up-to-date, so you can help your child stay safe. New methods of exploitation are developing all the time, but thankfully it's not all doom and gloom. There are plenty of sources – such as Ofcom – that keep a record of online scammers' methods, plus lists of which sites or schemes to be wary of.

### PRIORITISE PRIVACY

Teach your child to value their own privacy: that is, to respect the value of their personal data and be cautious about sharing it online. It's especially important that children know to safeguard their financial details and other sensitive data – and never to provide that information to anyone online, unless they're absolutely certain that it's safe, secure and for a legitimate reason.

### REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Encourage your child to report any suspicious or potentially harmful online encounters to you or another trusted adult. Make it clear that that they will never get in trouble for telling you about what's happened. Fraudsters often attempt to play on children's fear of getting into trouble, so cancelling out that notion robs internet scammers of one of their greatest weapons.

## Meet Our Expert

Ross Savage has a proven track record in countering financial crime, having spent 13 years with UK law enforcement – specialising in money laundering investigations and asset recovery from organised criminal groups. He now holds senior visiting expert positions at various organisations and delivers customised training and consultancy to government and private-sector clients worldwide.

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Source: https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/data-visualizations/data-spotlight/2022/12/who-experiences-scams-story-all-ages | https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/26628-2021-bbb-scamtracker-risk-report
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