



Cuffley School

NEWSLETTER

Caring Curious Courageous

30th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families have had a positive start to the spring term. As always, keeping children safe and supported - both in school and online - remains at the centre of everything we do at Cuffley.

In this newsletter, you'll find guidance on helping children stay safe with new devices, key information about age-appropriate apps, reminders about Safer Internet Day and how we're preparing for it in school, and details about Children's Mental Health Week and the importance of belonging. You'll also find links to trusted resources, including advice from the NSPCC and the Children's Commissioner, to help you navigate the digital world with your child.

As always, if there is a safeguarding topic you would like me to explore or include in a future newsletter, I'm more than happy to research and add it. Please feel free to contact me via the school office at any time.

Ms Evans



Who to contact if you have a concern about a child

If you are worried about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to contact the

Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies straightaway.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999 without hesitation

The Safeguarding Team oversees and co-ordinates all aspects of the school's work to ensure that children are kept safe. They regularly attend training to ensure their skills and knowledge are up to date.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:



Mrs Tracy Farmer

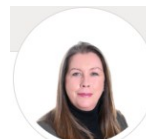
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:



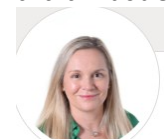
Mrs Wendy Wing



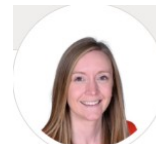
Mrs Andrea Charalambous



Ms Rachel Evans



Mrs Nadine Grainger



Hannah Bedwell

Safeguarding Governor:

Mrs Leanne Rafferty

All can be contacted via email: admin@cuffley.herts.sch.uk or by telephone: 01707 888100

Staying Safe Online with new devices?

Here are some useful reminders for children who are older and getting ready to have their first mobile phone.

Always set a password

If your child's new device has a password protection feature, use it! It'll help keep their private information safe and will deny others access to their device without permission. Your children's passwords should be something memorable to them – but something which other people can't guess (it's also a good idea for parents to write it down in case it gets forgotten!)

Keep numbers and devices private

Make sure your child understands that they should never share their phone number with someone they don't know or accept a friend request from them. They should also appreciate that it's a good idea to mainly keep their device out of sight, never lend it to a stranger, and never put it down somewhere that other people could steal it or take it to use without asking.

Pay attention to age ratings

One of the first things children want to do with any device is play games and explore apps. Before they download or install a new console game, check its age rating, please. Many popular games and apps have content that is not suitable for younger ages. The safest long-term solution is to adjust the device's settings, so they can only download and use games appropriate for their age.

Have 'the money conversation'

Before your children start using their new device in earnest, talk to them about in-app purchases and other ways that money might be spent through their device. Once they understand, you might want to agree on a spending limit and reassure them that they can come to you if they're uncertain or have made a purchase by accident.

Explain secure Wi-Fi Networks

Your home Wi-Fi is protected by a password that only your family knows, whereas public networks (like those in

coffee shops for example) can be accessed by anyone. It's important that your child grasps this difference because if they're using a portable device on an unsecured network, then a hacker could access their personal information without them knowing.

Discourage device dependency

Of course, children who've just got a new device will naturally want to spend as much time on it as possible but, whether they're zapping bad guys, watching videos or connecting with friends, it's easy for them to get attached very quickly. Gently remind them that having family time, going outdoors and getting some exercise are still fun too, and the device will still be there when they get back.

Limit screen time

Using a device for too long, especially just before bed, can interfere with a child's sleep quality and reduce their concentration and overall enthusiasm. It might be helpful to agree on certain times of day when they don't use their device. Most device settings let you specify a screen-time limit, helping your child stay fresh and focused in order to perform well at school.

Only pair with known Bluetooth devices

Your child may want to connect to another device via Bluetooth, so they can listen to music wirelessly or share pictures and videos with nearby friends. But, if they use Bluetooth to link with a device they don't know, they're at risk of a stranger being able to see their personal information or having someone transmit a virus to their device.

Turn location settings off

It's safest to disable the device's location services (if it's a portable device), so your child doesn't inadvertently make other people aware of where they are. You can usually do this via the device's privacy control settings. Turning location settings off not only means your child's whereabouts can't be tracked by others; it also significantly extends battery life.

Stay aware of the surroundings

It's quite common to see adults not looking where they're going while engrossed in their phone. Children are even more easily distracted. In some cases, children have been hit by cars or cyclists because they were staring at their device and lost track of where they were. Remind your children that screens and walking don't mix. If they need to use their device, they should stop in a safe place first.

Be there if they need to talk.

Even when you've made a device as secure as you can, there's still a possibility of your child seeing something that bothers them or someone they don't know attempting to contact them.

If this happens, listen to their concerns, empathise and reassure them. Once they've explained what happened, you can decide if you should take further action like blocking or reporting another user.

Good to know – age requirements for Apps

Many popular apps used by children have minimum age requirements and specific risks that parents should be aware of.

The most widely used platforms — **Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, WhatsApp and YouTube** — all require users to be 13+, while Tumblr requires users to be 16+. In addition, UK safeguarding organisations highlight a number of other commonly used apps that may pose risks for primary-aged children: **Discord**, which includes unmoderated chats and servers that can expose children to inappropriate content or grooming; **Roblox**, where user-created games and in-game chat can introduce unsuitable themes or strangers; **Reddit**, where some communities feature harmful or adult material; and creative or social-shopping apps such as **CapCut** and **TikTok Shop**, which may expose children to unsafe trends or persuasive commercial content. Anonymous video-chat platforms like **OmeTV** present particularly high risks because children can be matched instantly with strangers worldwide, often encountering inappropriate behaviour, while

messaging apps such as **Kik** and **Telegram** make monitoring difficult due to disappearing messages, encrypted chats or anonymous accounts. Even seemingly benign apps such as **BeReal** can unintentionally reveal a child's location or daily routine through real-time posting. Internet Matters also notes increasing use of AI-based chat and content apps by young people, which may expose them to misinformation or unsafe generated content without adequate safeguards. Staying informed about these platforms helps you as parents make safer choices and better support your children's digital wellbeing.

Online Safety Day – 10th February 2026



Children should feel safe at all times. This includes when they are online. We have an Online Safety Policy which is regularly reviewed and updated. Staying safe in the virtual world is regularly discussed in class, and we have lessons that promote the importance of this. A workshop for parents by the NSPCC, offers advice, support and helpful tips for internet safety
[NSPCC Online Safety Workshops](#)

As a school, we have already held a whole-school assembly on online safety, supported brilliantly by our Year 6 Digital Leaders who helped present key messages to the children. In computing lessons, teachers have begun adding additional activities in preparation for Safer Internet Day, alongside the safeguarding scenarios we explore in every lesson to help continually drip-feed the importance of staying safe in a digital world. If parents would like to find out more, a useful website we draw resources from can be found here:
[Safer Internet](#)

What is Children's Mental Health Week?

An annual mental health awareness week launched by children's mental health charity, [Place2Be](#). The week exists to empower, equip and give a voice to all children and young people in the UK.

When is Children's Mental Health Week?

This year, the week will take place from **9th – 15th February**.

The official theme for this year is '**This is My Place**' and schools are being encouraged to create an environment where pupils can really feel they belong.

Why does belonging matter for mental health?

Our mental health flourishes when we feel connected and valued. When children and young people have a strong sense of belonging, they:

- Feel more confident to be themselves and try new things
- Develop resilience to cope with challenges and setbacks
- Build stronger relationships and communication skills
- Have better self-esteem and understand their own worth
- Feel motivated to contribute positively to their communities

1 in 5 children now have a diagnosable mental health condition. By taking part in Children's Mental Health Week, we can help ensure that children and young people across the UK feel listened to and know that they are not alone.



A useful resource – What I wish my Parents or Carers Knew

I would like to draw your attention to an excellent resource from the Children's Commissioner for England that helps parents and carers navigate children's digital lives. The guide, [What I Wish My Parents or Carers Knew](#), offers clear, practical

advice on keeping children safe online, understanding their digital habits, and supporting

them as they grow up in an ever-changing online world.

I strongly recommend taking a few minutes to read it, as it contains a wealth of useful information designed to help families stay informed and protected. Read the guide here:

AI

While the benefits of AI cannot be dismissed or disputed, there are significant concerns about the negative impacts that go alongside this; as with much of the technology that has become so integral to our everyday lives, particularly when it comes to safeguarding our children. The fact that AI is evolving so rapidly can be quite daunting and we are all having to learn very quickly.

Here are some key things to remember:

Definition and Technology Behind Deepfakes

What are Deepfakes?

Deepfakes are manipulated digital content using advanced AI-based machine learning techniques to create convincing images, videos and audio where the content subject is not real or present. They are used to propagate disinformation and fake news or for entertainment purposes.

Types of Deepfakes

Face-swapping is a type of deepfake that involves replacing a person's face in an existing video or image with someone else's face.

Voice cloning is a type of deepfake that involves creating a synthetic voice that sounds like a real person's voice. It is used to create fake audio and video recordings.

There is a useful [BBC Bitesize](#) to share with children about Deepfakes.

