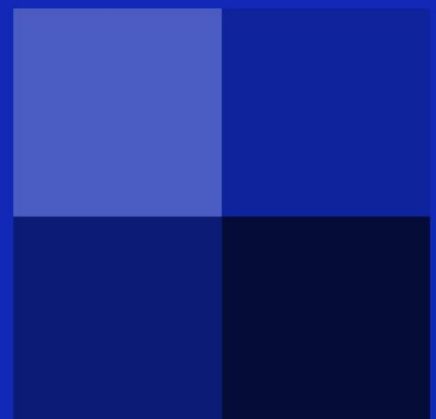




Online Neighbourhood Watch

E-Sussex, E-Safe

Safeguarding all children in East Sussex all the time



Provided by **East Sussex County Council**

One of the drawbacks of worldwide, instant communication in the home is that people don't meet and talk as much as they did.

We are all incredibly busy these days, and there is little time just to sit and talk.

This plays right into the hands of those who abuse on the internet and with connected technology generally.

Paedophiles, Hackers, Scammers, Fraudsters

All of the above work in darkness. What they do is despicable, embarrassing and humiliating – and they know it. They also know that their targets, (Let's not call them victims, let's call them targets – a victim is someone who is powerless – a target is someone who can fight back) will be reluctant to talk about what has happened, preferring in many cases to just put it behind them.

It is never nice to examine, for example, how paedophiles work online, but the more we talk about it, the more we shine a bright light on these people, and the more we understand about how they work, the earlier we can detect possible predation and intervene.

Many areas now have Neighbourhood Watch. Usually, there is Police involvement, and it is from here that we can extend the role to talk about online abuses.

Different things, different times, different areas.

Abusers tend not to try to flood the whole world all the time. Attacks vary throughout the year. Sometimes scam emails are going around, other times there are scam phone calls. Even paedophilia seems to come and go in waves. So the first thing a group might discuss is:-

What has happened in our area recently?

Once this is known, then the next question is:-

How do we tell people?

It is here that Social Media can help. Many towns now have message boards on Facebook. If yours doesn't, now might be the time to set one up. (Remember, Facebook sites can be open to membership or they can just be for information)

Are you parents of children of school age? If so, does your child's school have an e-safeguarding group? If not, could you offer to form one? Either way, when you know of scams in your area, you might ask:-

Can my child's school use their technology to spread the word?

Schools have parent/carers contact systems and they also have an online presence. Cultivating a good relationship with your school can be rewarding in terms of engaging in the activity of getting messages out there.

Then, we can move on to the following question:-

Do we have contacts with the Police, the Local Authority in particular Trading Standards?

Many Trading Standards departments have an interest in online fraud and would like to hear from you if you can let them know of potential fraudulent activity in your area. They also have means of promulgating this message in the wider community, for example, on the Local Authority website.

Like all initiatives, they have a tendency to fade. Remember that e-safeguarding is 24/7/365. We carry the technology around with us, and children have more access to it today than ever before.

Everyone seems to work hard these days, and there is little time to sit and discuss. If you find this is the case in your community, why not use the very technology we want to make safer? Ask yourself:-

Could I form a Facebook group where I could encourage people to talk about scams?

It is a very true saying that **“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good [people] to do nothing.”** (Edmund Burke)

There are things you CAN do.

- Ask your child's school to arrange for an e-safeguarding consultant to visit for the day.
- Ask your local authority if they have an e-safeguarding consultant who could visit your Neighbourhood Watch meetings
- Ask your school how you can help with e-safeguarding

But above all – sing out the message loud and clear. The more noise we make, the more unpleasant we make life for those who would abuse us and our children.