SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

S4S

WITH DR SANDRA WISEMAN

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Swiggle – A safer search tool for children

Swiggle is a child-friendly search engine developed by the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL). It is designed to offer a safer environment for younger users to search the internet, with filters and tools that reduce the likelihood of inappropriate content appearing in search results.

Swiggle uses Google's SafeSearch technology alongside additional filtering and a list of blocked sites. It also includes features such as:

- **A screen cover tool, allowing users to hide and report content they think is unsuitable**
- **A reporting function for flagging inappropriate material**
- **A SwiggleBot assistant to help children refine search queries**

The tool is **free to use** and can be accessed online or installed as a browser extension. While Swiggle provides an additional layer of safety, schools should remember that no search engine is entirely risk-free. Active supervision, appropriate filtering systems, and ongoing education around online safety remain essential.

More information is available via SWGfL:
https://swgfl.org.uk/services/swiggle/

Free webinar: A safeguarding-first approach to using AI in schools

Tuesday 26th November, 3:45pm (1 hour session)

This informative session explores how schools can safely and effectively navigate the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI).

The webinar will cover:

- **What AI is and how children are using it**
- **The key safeguarding risks linked to AI use**
- **Practical ways schools can keep safeguarding at the heart of their approach**

Who should attend?

This session is ideal for DSLs, SLT, Governors, and anyone involved in safeguarding or online safety.

Even if your school does not currently permit the use of AI, it's essential to understand the associated risks, many children are already using this technology outside of school.

Link to free webinar:
https://lgfl.bookinglive.com/book/add/p/227?utm_campaign=SafeguardED&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9Clfl7taKaFL8ihENsHgyDlw0nQzxAErYlsm5OOHe38RqtbkLEXAST_K4EvplmHCo-OdSor7HG1y2lV-953xplKkXTqS_Vbt0njYHiRZVLFntJolc&_hsmi=384564065&utm_content=384564065&utm_source=hs_email

More FREE resources about AI:
https://lgfl.net/safeguarding/resources?field_safeguarding_topic=636&_hsmi=384564065

What schools should know about Halloween safety

As Halloween approaches, the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) has published a timely guide to help keep children safe during this festive, but sometimes risky, time. Below are the main points for schools to be aware of and share in communications with families.

Fire and costume safety

- Many fancy dress costumes are highly flammable, they can ignite quickly and burn fast. Schools should remind families to keep children away from open flames and heat sources.
- Encourage the purchase of costumes from reputable suppliers and check for UKCA or CE marking, indicating that safety testing has occurred.
- One practical tip: layering clothes beneath a costume adds a protective barrier between fabric and skin.

Decorations and candles

- Candles and lit pumpkins are central to Halloween ambience, but they must be placed well out of the way of trick-or-treaters and not near flammable decorations.
- Consider using battery-powered (LED/flameless) candles instead, but ensure the battery compartments are securely closed so children can't access button batteries.

Visibility and road safety

- With daylight hours shrinking, darkness arrives earlier: reflective tape, glow sticks, or fluorescent materials can help make costumes safer near roads.
- Masks may impair vision and hearing. It's safer to use face paint for trick-or-treating, reserving masks for indoor or controlled environments.
- Encourage children, especially under 12, to be accompanied by an adult; older children should use pre-agreed routes and avoid using phones while walking.

Treat and choking hazards

- Be mindful of small or hard sweets that could present choking risks, especially for younger children. Remind families not to eat while walking or running.

Button battery warning

- Many Halloween props (lights, wands, novelties) use button batteries, which are extremely dangerous if swallowed. CAPT recommends checking that battery compartments are secured with screws.

What school can do

- Distribute CAPT's Halloween safety poster to families and display it around school.
- Integrate the safety tips into newsletters, social media, and parent communications in the lead-up to the 31st October.
- Remind pupils in assemblies or PSHE lessons about being visible, safe near roads, and cautious around candles.
- Encourage staff supervising Halloween events at school (e.g. discos or parties) to check costumes, lights, and battery-powered props for safety compliance.

Read:
https://capt.org.uk/halloween/?utm_source=capt&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=parentsoct25&mc_cid=376a41f0ed&mc_eid=d72f37d350

Cyber Choices: What schools should know

You may have seen recent reports suggesting that as many as one in five children aged 10-16 have been involved in online activity that crosses legal lines. In response, the National Crime Agency (NCA) coordinates a national initiative called Cyber Choices, which aims to help young people use their digital skills safely, ethically, and legally.

Here's a breakdown of what Cyber Choices is, why it matters to schools, and how it can be incorporated into your safeguarding strategy.

What Is Cyber Choices?

- **Purpose:** Cyber Choices aims to explain the difference between legal and illegal online behaviour, encourage informed decision-making, and promote positive, lawful cyber opportunities.
- **Offences addressed:** The programme focuses particularly on cyber-dependent offences those crimes that can only take place using digital tools (e.g. hacking, deploying malware, DDoS attacks) rather than crimes that merely use technology to facilitate illegal activity.
- **Legislation:** It raises awareness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990, the primary UK law under which many cyber offences are prosecuted.
- **Resources and activities:** The NCA offers free teaching materials, digital challenges, and guides to support pupils in understanding the legal and ethical use of technology.
  - **One example is the Cyber Choices challenge,** a gamified platform where pupils answer questions about the law, navigate obstacles, and learn through play.

Why it matters for schools

- **Early intervention rather than punishment** – Many pupils who engage in risky or illegal online activity do so out of curiosity, not malicious intent. Cyber Choices offers an alternative to exclusion by guiding them toward lawful digital pathways.
- **Safeguarding duty and KCSIE** – The updated Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (KCSIE) underlines the importance of considering emerging risks including digital behaviours. Some sources suggest that schools should integrate Cyber Choices as part of their wider safeguarding approach.
- **Supporting digital skills positively** - Many pupils have strong technical ability, Cyber Choices helps channel that talent into ethical and legitimate opportunities, such as cybersecurity careers, rather than misuse.

Addressing an increasing trend

The NCA and other commentators have noted rising numbers of young people involved in illicit digital behaviour. Schools that proactively address this in guidance and education are better placed to prevent harm.

What schools can do now

- **Embed Cyber Choices material in the curriculum** – Use NCA resources or the Cyber Choices Challenge as part of computing, PSHE, or online safety lessons.
- **Staff training and awareness** - Ensure teachers, DSLs, and safeguarding leads understand the difference between legal and illegal digital behaviour, and know how to respond or refer appropriately.
- **Referral pathways** – If you identify a pupil at risk of crossing into cybercrime, you can refer them (with consent) to a local Cyber Choices team through your regional police or organised crime unit.
- **Promote digital citizenship** –Encourage ongoing conversations in school about ethics, digital behaviour, and consequences. Use real-world examples to make discussions relatable.
- **Monitor and adapt policy** – Review your existing online safety and behaviour policies to ensure they address emerging cyber risks, referencing legislation like the Computer Misuse Act.

Read:
https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/cyber-choices

Forthcoming free safeguarding webinars for Autumn term 2025

Anti-bullying - Tuesday 14th October
Domestic abuse - Tuesday 21st October

Autumn term 2

Radicalisation -Tuesday 11th November
Child-on-child sexual abuse - Tuesday 18th November
Sexism and sexual harassment - Tuesday 25th November
Child sexual exploitation (CSE) - Tuesday 2nd December
County lines - Tuesday 9th December
Trauma - Tuesday 16th December

Just a reminder that all resources will be available in our **Safeguarding CPD Library**, where new recordings will be uploaded each week throughout this term.

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