

The Oasis Centre - Cornwall

Registered Charity Number 1139355, founded to serve the communities in the parishes of St Columb Major, St Mawgan-in-Pydar, St Eval and St Ervan



Looking Out for Children

Number 29 in a series of notes on important issues.

These can be frightening times, on occasions, for parents and grandparents. Technology keeps on advancing at a faster pace. Daily we learn new terms from the media to describe the new, quicker, cheaper, ‘better’ ways in which we and our children and grandchildren can spend our money, communicate with our friends and manage our lives. Much of this is driven by wireless technology and the Internet. The truth is that our children and grandchildren often understand it all better than we do. So do those involved in criminal activity with children as their targets.

Thanks also to the media, we know more today about child sexual exploitation, cyber bullying, Internet pornography, online trolls, grooming, sexting and other such issues. Perhaps these things did not exist when we were children? Perhaps they were better hidden or appeared in different forms? Sadly, the knowledge we now have tends to increase our worries. It is all so much more out in the open and not hidden on the top shelf.

Thankfully, there is plenty of help out there if we know where to look for it. The National Crime Agency has a specialist command dedicated to ‘Child Exploitation and Online Protection’, CEOP for short - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>. There is also the telephone ‘Childline’ that can be accessed by dialling 0800 1111. A website called - <http://parentinfo.org/> is full of advice and useful information. It provides a free service for schools and gives access to well over 200 articles of interest to parents and grandparents.

The latter organisation is partnered by Parent Zone - <https://parentzone.org.uk/>. Its strapline is “Making the Internet work for families” and there are lots of articles available on topics like WhatsApp, Amazon Prime, Body Image, Peer Pressure, Live Streaming and so on. There is even an item entitled Digital Detox, to assist parents concerned that their children are spending too much time on their gadgets, and the answer to the question – “Which apps should I be concerned about as a parent?”.

The sixth edition of ‘Digital Parenting’ (paid for by Vodafone) became available free from in September 2017 and can be found at - <https://parentzone.org.uk/Digital-Parenting-Magazine-order-here>. The magazine is for schools to distribute. The minimum order is 50 copies so, if you know of a school that might benefit and does not yet get this, you can sign up and get some for them.

Child minding is a further topic of immediate concern to parents and a lot of help can be obtained from - <https://www.childcare.co.uk/>. This social networking platform aims to help those seeking baby sitters, childminders, nannies and au pairs and also those offering those services. It gives access to a mass of helpful guidance on topics like checks and references.

Jeremy Simmonds, Chair, The Oasis Centre - Cornwall