

ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER.



SAFER INTERNET DAY - 2025

The annual Safer Internet Day is approaching, with this year's theme being **'Too good to be true? Keeping yourself and others safe from scams online.'**

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, February 11th**. This is an important topic, as scams are a significant issue for children and young people. SWGfL will provide free resources for all year groups, and more information can be found on their website [HERE](#).



Resources include:

- Lesson slides
- Activities
- Whole school assembly slides

CHILDLINE – SPOT THE FAKE VIDEO

Childline has recently released a new video titled **"Who is Real and Who is Fake"**, which secondary age students could find really engaging. The video, featuring teenage social media influencers **The Charvas**, addresses the important topics of sextortion and scams. In the video, The Charvas chat online with three girls and try to determine whether they are real or fake.

This 15-minute video fits perfectly with the theme of **Safer Internet Day**. You can watch the **Spot the Fake** video [HERE](#).



WHATSAPP ACCOUNT TAKEOVER SCAM

Criminal gangs are infiltrating chat groups, especially those with large numbers of participants where not everyone knows each other personally. Once inside, they target individuals by sending messages claiming that a code is on its way and needs to be shared. For instance, a student chat group was recently compromised by someone pretending to be a university lecturer. The imposter asked students to share their codes to join a group call. Once the code is shared, the criminals gain control of the victim's WhatsApp account and can send messages to others, often asking for money.



WhatsApp has been used for scams previously, and understanding these scams can be challenging, but the message is clear and simple: **Never share passwords or passcodes, no matter who asks or how trustworthy they seem.**

To help prevent these scams, teachers can give students practical tips such as:

- **Educate Students:** Regularly remind students about the importance of not sharing personal information, passwords, or passcodes with anyone.
- **Verify Identities:** Encourage students to verify the identity of anyone asking for sensitive information, even if the request seems to come from a trusted source.
- **Promote Awareness:** Share real-life examples of scams with students to help them recognize and avoid similar situations.
- **Use Group Settings Wisely:** Limit the number of participants in chat groups and ensure that everyone knows each other to reduce the risk of infiltration.
- **Report Suspicious Activity:** Teach students how to report suspicious messages or accounts to WhatsApp and other relevant authorities.
- **Stay Updated:** Keep yourself and your students informed about the latest online scams and security practices.



EXPERTS ANSWERING STUDENT QUESTIONS

In late 2024, Traci Gregory (née Good), the creator of the i-vengers and Special i-vengers programme for primary-aged students, had an idea to create videos responding to online safety questions from primary and secondary students. A trial was conducted, and the first six videos are now available. These videos are free to use, and if there is demand, they will continue to be free.

This initiative could be useful for teachers to use with pupils, enhancing their understanding of online safety. Videos can be accessed [HERE](#).

It is always advisable to view videos before sharing with pupils of any ages.

ONLINE ACTIONS - REAL WORLD CONSEQUENCES

Online actions can have real consequences now and in the future. Schools deal with this almost daily. The online disinhibition effect, where people feel anonymous or invisible behind a screen, makes timely reminders crucial.

An article in TES which explains the **SIFT process** and could be used well in KS2/3:

SIFT (verb) - to examine something closely.

- **S** - STOP, reflect, and consider.
- **I** - INVESTIGATE the source.
- **F** - FIND better coverage, dig further.
- **T** - TRACE the claim to its original context.

This could make for a great lesson- asking students to make up some social media or messaging examples sharing the SIFT process



DIGITAL LITERACY GUIDE - INHOPE

Funded by the European Union, InHope have released a new **Digital Literacy Guide** which is aimed primarily at teenagers, but may also be useful for schools.

The guide is a free download (no sign-up required) and goes into lots of areas such as "Know your Device", "Interacting Online", "Seeking Help" and more.

You can find the guide **HERE**.

The information in the newsletter is given to help promote the safety of children and young people online.

Every care has been taken to ensure the information and any recommendations in the newsletter are accurate at the time of publishing. Schools must make their own judgements when sharing our recommendations with parents and carers and, where appropriate, always risk assess with their pupils and whole school community in mind.

This newsletter is brought to you by the HFL Education Wellbeing team as part of their online safety support for schools and settings in Hertfordshire. Contact the team at wellbeing@hfleducation.org or call 01438 544464.

HFL Education is a leading national provider of school improvement and business support services, training, and resources, which enable schools, educational settings and multi-academy trusts to deliver a great education.

We support those we work with to achieve successful long-term outcomes for their children.

We believe that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live, their background or circumstances.



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