THE SAFEGUARDING TIMES

'Staying Safe Online' Edition

Written by young people, for young people.

Deepfakes: What You Need to Know

Written by KS4 Students from Ingleby Manor

You've probably seen videos online that look real, but something just feels... off. Welcome to the world of deepfakes — videos or images where AI changes someone's face, voice, or actions to make it look like they did or said something they never actually did.
Sometimes it's obvious, but most times it is hard to spot. If it looks a bit unrealistic, trust your gut — it probably is.
Here are some quick ways to spot a deepfake:

- The person's mouth doesn't match the words properly.
- Their voice sounds kind of robotic or computer-y.
- There are strange watermarks or signs that AI was used.
- Something just feels... off. (Yes, your brain is actually good at noticing this!)

The big thing to remember?
You can't believe everything you see online.

So stay smart, stay curious, and always think twice before sharing something that seems a little too wild to be real.

What Is Online Blackmail?

Written by KS3 Student Council at St Hild's CofE School

Online blackmail, sometimes called 'Sextortion', is when someone threatens to share private information, images, or videos—stuff you'd never want shared - unless something is done for them (often asking for money or gift cards). It is a form of abuse and is a criminal offence.

What are the warning signs?

- They might have a fake profile (not much content, very few images, no mutual friends).
- They try to get to know you very quickly.
- It seems too good to be true - they might pretend to be a modelling scout or say they can help you make quick money etc.
- They pressure you to do things you're not comfortable with.

What to do if something feels wrong, or if someone is threatening you:

- Report the account to the app you're using
- Block the account
- Talk to a trusted adult (parent, teacher, youth worker—anyone you feel safe with).
- If someone is threatening you, tell the police straight away, you can also report it CEOP.

If someone has shared an image or video of you online without your consent and you're under 18, you can get help to get it removed from Report Remove, and Take It Down.

CEOP   **Report Remove**   **Take It Down**

For more information, support, resources and more, visit the HSSCP Children and Young People's webpage!

Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees
SAFEGUARDING
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People Who Help Us: Cyber Crime

Written by KS3 Students at High Tunstall College of Science

Earlier this term, we interviewed Kelly Close, who is a Cyber Protect and Prepare Officer for Cleveland Police. Kelly works to make the online space safer for all, including helping to protect young people from cyber-crimes. We put together a Q&A to find out more about the work that Kelly does and how she helps to make the online space safer.

What is your role and how do you help to protect young people online?
Protecting young people online can be very challenging as most of our lives are online now – young people spend lots of time online talking, playing games, social media etc. My role includes looking for the risks online. I also do lots of webinars online with parents to help them to recognise what they need to know and help them to understand the risks and how to manage them.
I also help them to learn how to spot AI – there is something called AI hallucinations where it will 'fill in the gaps' if it doesn't know all the information, which can lead to some pretty big mistakes! AI can have a darker side too and can be used inappropriately at times which can be very serious for the victims and can have very serious consequences for the perpetrator, even if they didn't realise that what they were doing was illegal.

What is the most common cyber-crime you see that affects young people?
For young people, it is social media account take-over to try and scams for money or things like concert tickets. Once someone has taken your account, it can be very difficult to get it back and the hackers often use it to try and scam your friends who are linked to your account.

Unfortunately, one of the other most common crimes against young people online is 'sextortion', which is where someone might ask for private images and use this to try to blackmail a young person. It is very serious and needs to be reported at the earliest opportunity so we can help to protect the young people who might be involved.

What advice would you give to young people to help them use the internet safely?
Think BEFORE you post or share. There are tools that can help to get things taken down, but there is a limit to what can be done once something is up on the internet and please remember that there can be very real-world consequences to what happens online.
Use really strong passwords and use a good core password for your account – NEVER have the word 'password' as part of your password! If something happens, please tell someone and get help.
Don't click any links, especially on sites like Discord.
Make sure your devices are updated as they often include fixes for security issues.
Most importantly, look after each other.