



WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- Group Chats
- Pants
- Mental Health Support Team

Spotlight on Safeguarding

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to our March edition of our Safeguarding Newsletter. In this edition we spotlight Group chats and how you can support your child at home when engaging with others online.

Rules to teach you child for positive chat experiences.



1

Think Before You Type

Just like in real-life, it's always good to take a second and consider what you're saying.

Keep Personal Info Private

Say it as many times as you need, and then say it some more.



2



3

Be Kind

Don't say anything you wouldn't say to a person's face.

Consider Your Audience in Group Chats

Avoid inside jokes with one party in the chat, and don't post anything that will offend any member.



4



5

Respect Other's Wishes

If a friend doesn't want a photo or video of them shared, don't show it to anyone.

Talk Only to People You Know

They can branch out when they get older, but in the beginning, it's best to limit their circle to those they know IRL.



6

GROUP CHATS

In today's digital world, group chats on platforms like WhatsApp, Snapchat, and others have become a common way for children to stay connected. While these chats can foster friendships, they also come with risks that are especially concerning for primary school-aged children.

The realities of group chats

Group chats are often viewed as harmless, but they can expose children to risks parents might not anticipate. These digital spaces can quickly become environments where negative behaviours thrive without adult supervision. Primary school-aged children, still developing social and emotional maturity, may struggle with the fast-paced and often unfiltered nature of these chats.

Many parents are unaware of what can occur in group chats. Unfortunately, children can be exposed to:

- Unkind behaviour: teasing, exclusion, and bullying can occur more easily behind a screen.
- Inappropriate content: children may encounter or share inappropriate language, images, videos, or other harmful content.
- Peer pressure: children may feel pressured to participate in conversations they are uncomfortable with.
- Overuse and distraction: constant notifications can interfere with sleep, homework, and family time.

How can parents help?

As a parent, there are practical steps you can take to educate and monitor your child's use of group chats:

- Have open conversations: talk to your child about the importance of kindness, respect, and the impact of their words online.
- Set boundaries: establish rules around screen time and appropriate online behaviour.
- Monitor group chats: regularly check the content of your child's chats and discuss any concerning messages.
- Teach privacy awareness: encourage your child to think before sharing personal information or images.
- Promote reporting: let your child know they can come to you if they feel uncomfortable or witness inappropriate behaviour.
- Use parental controls: utilise built-in tools on devices and apps to limit access and monitor usage.

When is the right time to talk PANTS?

Every family is different, and when and where you have these conversations may depend on your child's age, or how grown up they are - it's all about whatever feels natural for you and them.

Some examples of times you can talk PANTS are:

- After school – if they've had a lesson on personal relationships or Talk PANTS at school, ask them what they remember when they get home.
- Bathtime – you could start a conversation when you're running your child's bath, or helping them get dressed.
- Car journeys – this can be a great time to talk, and your child will have plenty of time to ask questions if they need.
- Reading our new PANTS storybook together.
- Singing – sing along to our PANTS song with Pantosaurus!
- Swimming – a great time to say that what's covered by swimwear is private.
- Walking – walking home from school, or a weekend walk to the shops can help you both feel more at ease as you stroll and chat.
- Watching TV – if a TV show features a sensitive storyline, you can encourage them to talk about anything that upsets them.



Mental Health Support Team

Wellbeing webinars



Mersey Care
NHS Foundation Trust

Your MHST is running a series of mental health and wellbeing webinars.

TOPICS AND DATES

Understanding Low Mood - 25 February

Neurodiversity - 18 March

Parenting Skills for Behaviour - 29 April

LGBTQ+ - 10 June

Emotional Regulation - 13 May

Body Image - 8 July

WHEN

Tuesdays 3.30pm to 4.15pm on Zoom
(link will be emailed once you register)

Webinars will be recorded. No chat function will be available for safety purposes.

We have two webinars available on our website. These sessions focus on Understanding Anxiety will give you a flavour of what to expect from a session.

To register please email which webinar you want to attend to events@merseycare.nhs.uk



Report any concerns if you suspect a child is being abused or is in danger of being abused. Please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Claire Roper), or one of the Safe and Sound team. You can also contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on:

- 01925 443322, press one and either say MASH or the name of their person you wish to speak to (if known)
- Outside of office hours call on 01925 444400. If you believe the child is in immediate risk of harm, call 999.
- If you believe a crime has been committed, contact the police on 101