National | Autumn 2026

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# TikTok

## Parent / Carer Advice



13

## What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app where users share short video clips of 15 seconds duration. It started out as an app named 'Musically' and was used to share videos of dancing and lip-syncing to music. Much of the content on TikTok still reflects these origins, but popular videos now also include pets, makeup, magic tricks, fashion, art, people reacting to situations, etc. According to OSA research, TikTok is now as widely used by 11-14 year olds as SnapChat and Instagram.

## Safety Tips

- **As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use TikTok and any issues they have encountered.**
- **Discuss whether it would be best to change your child's account to private to avoid interactions with non-friends. If you agree to keep the account public you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users.**
- **Help your child to spring clean their account from time to time by removing videos you agree to be inappropriate.**
- **Ensure your child knows not to post videos in their school uniform. Also discuss how recording videos at school might break school rules and what the consequences could be.**
- **The TikTok settings allow you to set a time limit for how long each day you want your child to be able to use the app. This can be password protected to ensure they stick to the limit.**




## Reasons for concern

- TikTok has a minimum age rating of 13 and anybody under 18 should have parental permission to use the app. However, new users simply enter a date of birth to indicate their age and there are no verification steps. As such, children of any age can create an account by using a false date of birth.
- New users will be shown a range of video clips the app feels may be of interest. Many of these will quickly expose users to offensive language which will be inappropriate for children.
- The clothing worn and the type of dancing in some videos could be deemed sexualised and therefore something that might be inappropriate for younger users to be exposed to.
- The default privacy settings in the app are concerning. Although only friends can send users direct messages, the videos posted by users can be seen by anybody and anybody can like / comment on the videos. New users are also available for anybody to perform a musical duet with. Such default settings can leave children vulnerable to unwanted communication from others.
- Many children in the UK are posting videos to TikTok where they are wearing their school uniform, making it possible for strangers to identify their location.
- The nature of videos children are posting to TikTok (singing, dancing, etc) can leave them vulnerable to receiving negative comments which can have an impact on mental health.
- The company that owns TikTok is facing legal issues and stands accused of illegally collecting data on children (when it was Musically) and the app has been deemed a 'potential security risk by the FBI'.

OSA
Online Safety Alliance

www.onlinesafetyalliance.org
Online safety education for school staff, pupils and parents

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# 6 Ways Parents Can Help Children with SEND Through Autumn Changes

**As summer gives way to autumn, children across the UK are adjusting to darker evenings, colder mornings, new school terms and the return of structured routines. For many children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), this seasonal shift can be particularly difficult to navigate.**

**Changes to daylight, temperature, clothing and routine can all disrupt the predictability that many children with SEND rely on, leading to increased anxiety, dysregulation or resistance to everyday tasks.**

Here, Lisa Spann, Managing Director at Fledglings, shares six practical ways parents can help their child feel calmer and more settled as the seasons change.

Lisa Spann, Managing Director at Fledglings, said: *"Autumn brings a lot of change at once, shorter days, new routines and colder weather, and for children with SEND, that combination can feel overwhelming. Small, consistent adjustments at home can make a real difference in helping children feel secure through the transition."*

**1. Ease into new routines gradually -** *"Rather than switching bedtimes or morning routines all at once as the clocks change, introduce small adjustments over a week or two, so the change feels manageable rather than sudden. This gives children time to adapt without the shock of an abrupt shift to their body clock."*

**2. Use visual tools to prepare for shorter days -** *"A visual timetable or now-and-next board can help children understand what to expect as evenings draw in and after-school routines shift, reducing the uncertainty that comes with change. Keeping these visuals somewhere consistent, like a hallway or bedroom wall, makes them easy to refer back to."*

**3. Talk through seasonal changes in advance -** *"Simple, clear explanations or social stories about what's different in autumn, such as new uniforms, darker mornings or classroom changes, can help children feel prepared rather than caught off guard. Revisiting these conversations a few times in the run-up to the change reinforces what to expect.*

*"Sensory tools like Changing Seasons Sensory Tubes can also give children a calming, hands-on way to explore the idea of seasons shifting, making the concept feel less overwhelming."*

**4. Create a calm space to decompress -** *"A quiet, low-stimulation area at home gives children somewhere to retreat and regulate after a demanding day, which is especially valuable as the return to term adds extra sensory and social load. Even a small corner with familiar, comforting items can serve this purpose well."*

**5. Keep communication open with school -** *"Sharing any concerns with teachers or SENCOs early in the term helps ensure strategies that work at home are reinforced at school, giving children a consistent experience across both environments. Brief, regular updates are often more useful than waiting for a scheduled review."*

**6. Build in extra time to rest -** *"The adjustment to autumn routines can be more tiring than parents expect. Allowing extra downtime after school and activities helps prevent children from becoming overwhelmed, and protecting a few unstructured hours each week can make the whole term feel more manageable."*

"Autumn can be a challenging season for children with SEND, but with preparation, predictability and a little extra patience, parents can help their child move through the transition feeling calmer and more confident."

Discover more advice and practical resources for supporting children with SEND at: **www.fledglings.org.uk/**





# Discover a great read for your child...

## Once Upon a Tiger

**Author & Illustrator: Sarah Massini**
**Publisher: Simon & Schuster Ltd**




OUT NOW

A beautiful, moving tale about kindness and bravery that has all the hallmarks of a modern classic.

One day, a grumpy tiger wakes to find not one, not two, but three child-cubs upon his back – and try as he might, they will not move. So tiger and children stay together and slowly, gently come to teach one another about bravery, kindness and belonging.

- Classic, satisfying storytelling accompanied by exquisite illustrations.
- Key, relatable themes of shyness, kindness and bravery.
- Perfect for the whole family to share - and destined to become a childhood favourite.

## Operation Perilous Magnetism - Perilous Adventures

**Author: Andrew Evennett**
**Publisher: Troubador Publishing**




OUT NOW

Five teenagers from different parts of Scotland are brought together by a love of mountain biking, forming Équipe Sans Peur (Team Without Fear).

While spending the summer together at a Highland castle, they stumble upon a lost iPhone and sinister activity around the local wind farm.

The members of Équipe Sans Peur suspect that they have discovered some form of international industrial espionage. Although they are determined to gather proof and thwart the spies, will the courage, agility and ingenuity of Équipe Sans Peur be a match for their ruthless opponents during a dangerous and breathless game of cat and mouse?

## Tiny Hercules - Golden Cabbage Chaos: Exclusive Edition

**Authors: Jon Lock & Nich Angell**
**Publisher: Pan Macmillan**




OUT NOW

Get ready for legendary laughs with Tiny Hercules! Perfect for fans of Bunny vs Monkey and Dogman, Golden Cabbage Chaos is the second title in the side-splitting full colour comic book series from co-creators Jon Lock and Nich Angell.

Launch into heroic hilarity with the tiniest and mightiest hero. Tiny Hercules is trying to win his way back to Tiny Olympus, one epic deed at a time!

Ready for his next task, Tiny Hercules has to find the elusive golden cabbage. But what he doesn't realize is that Tiny Zeus has sent three mythical beasts to stop him in his tracks! Armed with facts, figures and charts he's ready for a mathematical fight! When Tiny Hercules and Jeff's adventures cross over, chaos is bound to reign in this hilarious full-colour graphic novel!

## How Not To Be a Pirate: The Trouble with Curses

**Author: Jenny Pearson**
**Illustrator: Paula Bowles**
**Publisher: Usborne Publishing Ltd**




OUT NOW

Get ready to set sail on a hilarious new swashbuckling adventure series from bestselling, award-winning author, Jenny Pearson.

Wilbur doesn't believe he's destined to be a great pirate. He hates heights, gets seasick and is too scared to fire a cannon.

But Wilbur, together with shipmates Ellie and Gilbert, is taking his Level One Pirate Grading. They're in a race to find the greatest treasure of all: one of the legendary Jewels of the Sea. How's he ever going to win?

With cursed treasure, rival crews, cannon-blasting battles and booby-trapped islands, danger is never far away. Can Wilbur survive the storm and become the pirate he's meant to be?

## Giant Parsnip Soup

OUT NOW




**Author & illustrator: Daniela Sousa**
**Publisher: Simon & Schuster Ltd**

On a lovely sunny day, a group of friends discovers something very unusual . . . It's big. It's got leaves. It's in their way. What is it? A giant parsnip!

In this adorable story from the creator of Friends and The Suitcase, a group of children use their imagination to turn a giant parsnip into a delicious dinner for them all to share. Each page has something to count and spot as the book introduces the numbers one to ten.

Perfect for little ones who are learning to count, this cosy and classic book introduces numbers and celebrates the joy of working and playing together.

Includes a recipe for parsnip soup for families to try at home!

## Unicornia: Camping in the Clouds

OUT NOW




**Author: Ana Punset**
**Illustrator: Diana Vicedo**
**Publisher: Walker Books Ltd**

Magical schools have magical school trips! Welcome to the Campsite in the Clouds.

What could be more magical than a camping trip in the sky?! Claudia and Pippa can hardly wait ... but something is troubling Sara. Can she overcome her fears in time to help her friends solve a sky-high mystery? Find out in this star-filled, cloud-camping adventure!

With colour illustrations, this magical chapter-book series is great for building confidence in newly independent readers.

## The Big Stink Volume 2 - Postman Planet

OUT NOW




**Author: Ban Davis**
**Illustrator: Yasmin Sheikh**
**Publisher: Simon & Schuster Ltd**

The planet of Nicetopia is the politest corner of the galaxy.

Nothing could ever spoil their ideal society . . . UNTIL evil super-genius Dr Stankenstein dumps HUGE quantities of his Stink Potion into their water supply. Everyone on the planet is farting uncontrollably, ruining their polite paradise.

There are only twelve space-hours left before the atmosphere becomes irrevocably farty, and the planet of Nicetopia becomes RUDETOPIA. The only hope? The antitdote. And there is only one person in the galaxy intrepid enough to deliver it. You've guessed it . . . POSTMAN PLANET!

## The Diary of Wiska Wildflower: The Crystal Cave

OUT NOW




**Author: Harriet Muncaster**
**Publisher: Oxford University Press**

We're going on a school trip to Wiskling Mountain! We have to read a map and make our own camp and find and cook our own food-it's a BIG deal.

Wiska is excited to be paired with Citrine for the school trip, but when Citirne persuades her to join her on a secret mission to find a rare starflower, she begins to have doubts.

After disaster strikes, the friends seek sanctuary in a hidden spot in Wiskling Wood. What they find there is incredible and life-changing. But will their friendship survive this dangerous adventure?



# Thinking of Separating? – Legal Options To Consider

**Separation can be difficult, even without children involved. For separating parents, it can feel especially daunting, and we are here to provide initial guidance and support.**

First and foremost, the law is very clear - Contact is the right of the child, not parent, this is one of the primary principles of the Children Act 1989. Separating parents need to understand that the child's welfare is the court's paramount consideration.

In order to safeguard the children and prevent them from being exposed to domestic abuse, the government recently made amendments in respect of parental involvement in the child's life upon separation, which before was automatic. From now on, the court will have to assess if it is in the child's best interests to see their parent.

Usually, a parent who is seeking contact needs to decide what is reasonable and realistic proposal that works the best for the child.

Contact can take various forms – direct, staying, holiday, supervised, indirect. However, both parties need to hold a parental responsibility (PR) before they can agree any childcare arrangements – eg unmarried father has to be on a birth certificate.

**There are 4 options to agree a resolution depending on specific circumstances:**

**1. Direct discussion and agreement between parents, can also sign 'Parenting Plan' agreement, which can be found on CAFCASS website. Not legally binding.**

**2. Mediation – an independent family law mediator can assist to reach an agreement. Not legally binding, however, in most cases mediation has to be attempted before going to court.**

**3. Solicitor negotiation - each party can instruct their own solicitor who will attempt to reach a resolution in line with the CA 1989 principles in the child's best interests. Can be legally binding agreement if applied to a court by way of a 'Consent Order'.**

**4. Court proceedings – various Section 8 CA 1989 orders available, the most common being Child Arrangements Order (CAO). Decision will be made in child's best interests upon Cafcass recommendations. Final legally binding court order.**

At DTM Legal we offer a free initial 30-minute consultation, please get in touch to discuss your circumstances.

Contact Liz Dubkova on
**0151 321 0000** or email her
**liz.dubkova@dtmlegal.com**
**www.dtmlegal.com**

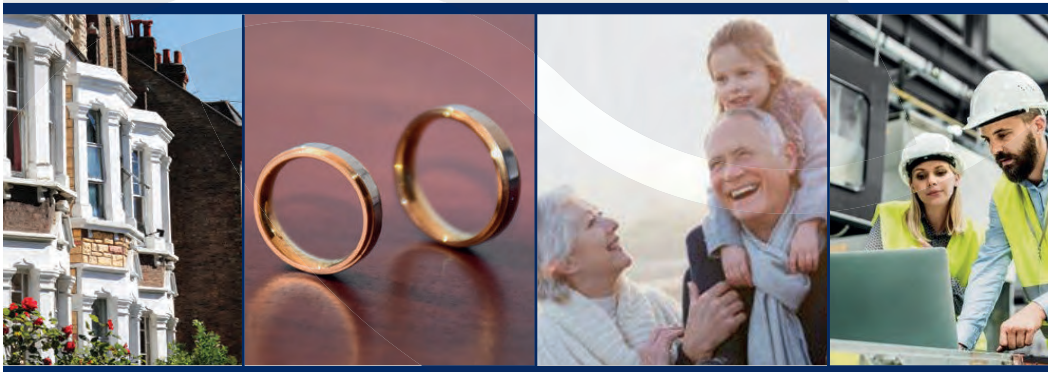


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## 8 Back-to-School Spending Mistakes That Leave Families Out of Pocket

**1. Replacing everything when it isn't necessary -** "It's easy to assume a new school year means a completely fresh start, but a lot of what children already own may still have plenty of life left in it. Before buying anything, it's worth checking whether last year's coat, bag, water bottle or PE kit can be used again. Focusing your spending on the items that genuinely need replacing, rather than everything at once, can save a surprising amount."

**2. Not setting a budget before you start -** Setting yourself a rough budget beforehand makes it much easier to prioritise the essentials and decide where the extras really matter. It doesn't need to be rigid, but having a figure in mind helps you make more considered decisions along the way.

**3. Shopping without a list -** Checking the school's requirements and writing a list before you go can help you stay focused and avoid paying for items you don't really need."

**4. Buying branded items -** From stationery to uniform basics such as shirts, trousers and jumpers, branded versions can cost considerably more than supermarket or own-brand alternatives that do exactly the same job. Where a specific logo or item isn't required by the school, choosing more affordable options can make a real difference across a full shopping list.

**5. Overlooking second-hand and pre-loved options** - Many schools run second-hand uniform sales, and local selling groups can be a great source of good-quality items at a fraction of the price. It's an easy way to cut costs, and it's better for the environment too.

**6. Giving in to pester power -** It's completely natural for children to want the latest bag, trainers or gadget their friends have, and it can be hard to say no. Being clear about what's within budget, and involving older children in the decisions, can help manage expectations while still letting them feel involved in getting ready for the new term.

**7. Splurging on the latest tech and gadgets -** New devices, headphones and accessories are heavily marketed around this time of year, but it's worth pausing to consider whether an upgrade is genuinely needed for schoolwork. If an existing device still does the job, holding off can free up money for the essentials that matter more day to day.

**8. Forgetting the hidden and ongoing costs -** The initial shop is often only part of the picture. School trips, clubs, lunches, travel and one-off requests can all add up throughout the term. Factoring these ongoing costs into your budget from the outset can help you avoid being caught out later and make the months ahead easier to manage.

Getting ready for a new school year is a big moment for families, and no one should feel guilty about wanting their children to have what they need. The key is to make those spending decisions intentionally. A little preparation can help you feel organised and in control, so the new term starts on the right foot without leaving your finances under strain.

*Many thanks to https://sunny.co.uk/good-vibes/*


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Greenwich




**Schools have been back in session for a few weeks now, and hopefully children are getting used to their new schools, classes and routines.**

**But as the NSPCC's Childline counsellors around the country know, young people can find starting the September half term tricky to deal with for a variety**

Whilst for many the start of a new term can be exciting - with buying new pencil cases and bags or getting used to new uniforms, it can also be a time of uncertainty and anxiety as children head into uncharted territory.

Our Childline teams are available around the clock to support young people across the UK no matter what they're going through and hear from children every day who need to talk about something they're experiencing at school.

Last year, more than 1,500 Childline counselling sessions with young people across the country included mentions of returning to school or college and, in 35% of those sessions, children's emotional wellbeing was the primary concern, making it the most common issue discussed.

One girl, aged 13, who contacted Childline, told counsellors: "I'm worried about going back to school. I've been bullied over the summer, like being sent mean messages online. I have been finding it hard to sleep as I have anxiety about the bullying. My parents know what is happening and are supportive. I feel a bit better for talking it through. I'm going to try to get some sleep now."



Our Childline practitioners and website are available to offer free and confidential help to children 24/7, but there are also some good things parents and carers can do to help children starting or returning to school.

We have put together some advice which can help children, parents and carers to feel more at ease when returning to school.

Starting at a new school or beginning a new school year can be daunting for young people, so it's a good idea to talk to them about the school day and what they can expect. By now, they're hopefully used to their new routine, but making sure they know when need to be up and dressed, when to set off to school, and when they will get playtime and lunchtime breaks at school can help them feel confident and prepared for the school week. If they're being

picked up from school, make sure they know who is collecting them and from where. If they're walking or taking the bus, make sure they're comfortable and confident with their route.

If you're worried about how your child is coping with the new term, but they seem reluctant to talk about it with you, you can signpost them to Childline – but encouraging them to write down their feelings can also be helpful. Writing it down and chatting through their concerns can help to ease their worries and gives you a chance to remind them about the positive aspects of school.

Sticking to a good bedtime routine and keeping electronic devices out of bedrooms can ensure they get a good night's sleep, and preparing their bag, uniform and packed lunch the night before will save time and can help you all feel calmer during the morning rush.

After school, it's important to make time each day for things that they enjoy - playing outside or joining in with sport are great ways to support their wellbeing, let off some steam and keep a healthy routine, while going for a walk with them offers a great opportunity to find out more about how their day went.

Remember, we're only a few weeks into the new term and it can take time to settle into a new school or a new routine. Things should settle down if they haven't already, but if you notice any changes in your child's behaviour that worry you, speak to their teacher and find ways in which you can support them.

Recently, one of our Childline practitioners was a guest on the latest episode of the Happy Mum podcast as part of the partnership where they chatted with presenter Giovanna Fletcher about children's confidence, emotional readiness and practical ways to navigate the back to school transition. Listen wherever you get your podcasts for more advice.

Parents can also contact the **NSPCC Helpline** on **0808 800 5000** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk** for help and support. Also, there is loads of great advice and support available on the NSPCC website at **www.nspcc.org.uk**

NSPCC






# Learn some essential life-saving skills with St John Ambulance

Our 2026 **Save a Life September** campaign put the power of first aid into more people's hands as we focused on teaching at least 500,000 people vital lifesaving skills through public demos, online videos and first aid advice.



St John Ambulance advocates that everyone should know the skills vital to try to save a life. Let's go through in turn each of the techniques we taught during Save a Life September so you too can have awareness of what to do and know where you can get more information and help.

## CHOKING

Choking means the airway is partly or completely blocked, often by food. Ask if they are choking, and advise them to try to cough, but if they can't, and are unable to speak and are very distressed, you will have to help them.

Give the person up to five sharp back blows, between the shoulder blades. You need to support them to lean forwards while you give these and check after each blow to see if anything has come out.

If five back blows don't work, give up to five abdominal thrusts. To do these, stand behind them, put your arms around their waist putting a clenched fist midway between the belly button and the bottom of their chest. Grasp this hand with your other hand and pull inwards and upwards. Check between each thrust to see if it has worked.

Alternate back blows and abdominal thrusts calling 999 if the blockage does not clear. Be aware they may become unresponsive and need CPR.



## CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR) AND USING A DEFIBRILLATOR

If someone suffers a cardiac arrest, they will not be breathing normally and their heart stops. With no help, they are unlikely to survive, but by alerting the emergency services and starting CPR, we can increase their chances.

If someone collapses, call 999 and then start chest compressions. Kneel beside them, placing your hands one on top of the other in the centre of their chest, and with your shoulders directly over their body push down hard and fast, letting your hands come up fully between compressions.



If trained, give two rescue breaths after every 30 compressions. The call handler will tell you what to do and tell anyone with you to fetch a nearby available defibrillator. Once the defibrillator arrives, turn it on and follow the instructions making sure chest compressions continue.

## BLEEDING AND LIFE-THREATENING HAEMORRHAGE

The priority is to stop the bleeding. Make sure the area is safe for you, and if you have them, put on first aid gloves.

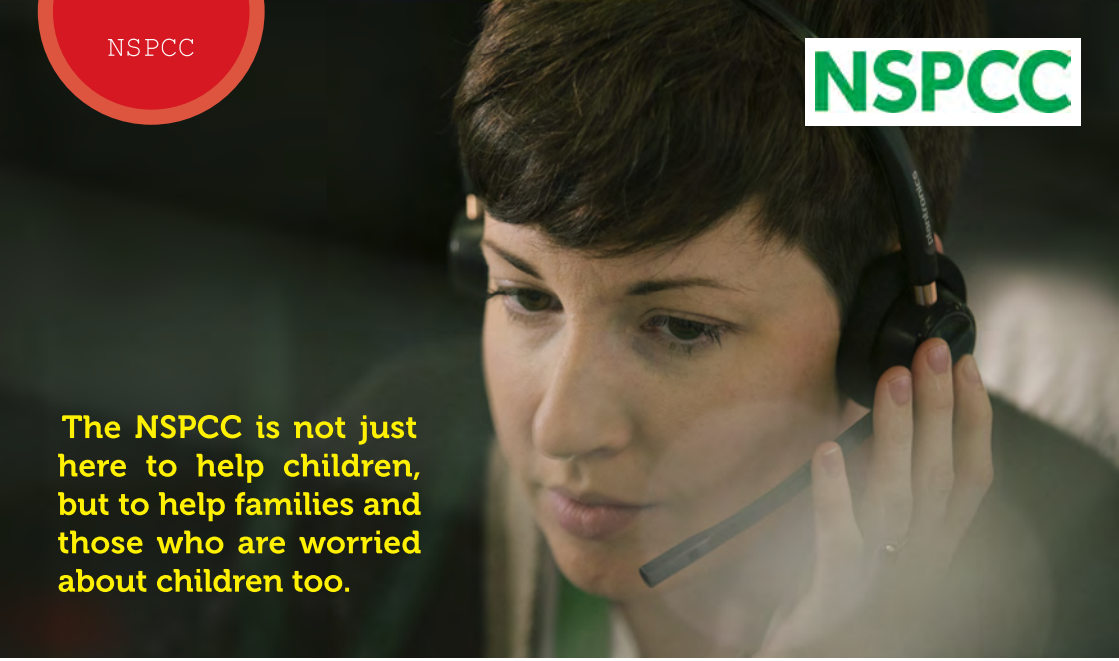
Cover and raise the wound with a clean non-fluffy cloth, or a sterile dressing and apply direct pressure to the wound. If there is an object in the wound, don't remove it but apply pressure each side of the object to push the edges together. Call the emergency services for advice while maintaining pressure.

The loss of blood may cause the person to develop shock, so, if possible, lie them down, raising and supporting their legs, and loosen tight clothing. A cover over them will help. If the bleeding is not controlled and comes through the dressing, remove it, and reapply pressure using a new pad. If the injury is very severe, the call handler may advise on how to improvise a tourniquet.

We hope that you will never need to use these skills, but it is much better to be prepared. For more information on any of the topics discussed here, visit **sja.org.uk** and go to the advice section of our website where you will find a lot of free written advice and first aid videos.



*Photo: Roo Pitt*




**While the Childline service is available to young people around the clock, the NSPCC Helpline is also there to offer support and guidance to adults who are concerned about a young person or family.**

Last year, the Helpline handled a record number of child welfare contacts where the main concern was domestic abuse.

Between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, the Helpline handled 8,448 contacts on this topic – an increase of 8% on the previous year and more than 80% higher than when the service began recording this data in 2021/22.

Almost a third of last year's contacts ended with a referral to local agencies like police or children's social services, with the NSPCC Helpline trying to ensure the children experiencing domestic abuse are properly protected.

Domestic abuse can include coercive control, and emotional, verbal, physical and financial abuse. Although the majority of domestic abuse victims are women, men can also be affected, and it is vital support is made available to each person according to their needs.

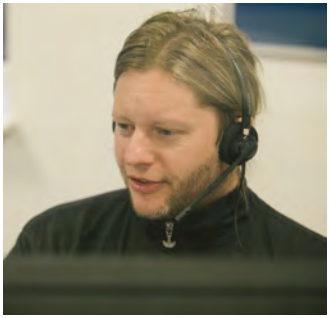
One adult who called the NSPCC Helpline, said: "My sister recently left an abusive situation with her 6-month-old baby, but her ex-partner is still in control of their finances and emotionally abusing her.

"Her ex has drained their accounts so she can't buy what she needs for my niece. The ex is bombarding her with threats online and via text, even saying they will kill themselves if she doesn't go back or let them see the baby. Where can we get support and protection for my sister and niece?"

The NSPCC Helpline has specially trained advisors who can speak to the public if they are worried about a child who may be experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse – whether that is physical violence or coercive and controlling behaviour.

Margaret*, suffered years of abuse by her ex-husband and has spoken through the NSPCC about the impact this had on her children to urge victims to ask for help.

She said: "I had always known Tony* was controlling, but after our wedding he became emotionally and psychologically abusive, threatening me and belittling me all the time. Then he started being physically abusive.
"We had two children and he



became abusive towards them too, shouting and beating them with belts and shoes when I wasn't there. I could see that they were really affected. They were subdued, sullen and didn't really behave like children at all.

"One day, I finally snapped and called the police. They helped get us to a safe house.

"I was really worried about whether my children would be able to get over the abuse they had witnessed and endured. They took part in the NSPCC's domestic abuse programme, and the light has come back into their eyes. They changed from quiet and subdued children to boisterous and playful – like they've released whatever they'd been holding on to.

"If there are any parents reading this and going through something like us, or you know someone who is, help is out there. I know my children will be OK, but without help, they may not have been."

Domestic abuse can have a lasting, harmful effect on a child's wellbeing, with the repercussions extending well into the future.

Signs that a child has experienced domestic abuse can include aggression, anti-social behaviour, bed wetting, attention seeking, tantrums, withdrawal and problems in school.

Paddi Vint, NSPCC Helpline Service Head, called the record level of adults contacting the service about a child experiencing domestic abuse "alarming", and called on anyone with concerns to speak up.

Paddi said: "Domestic abuse is often hidden, with stigma and shame making it harder to ask for help. Children and young people might also feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

"If you're worried about a child, you can speak to our free NSPCC Helpline in complete confidence. Reaching out can be the first step to help families begin to move forward."

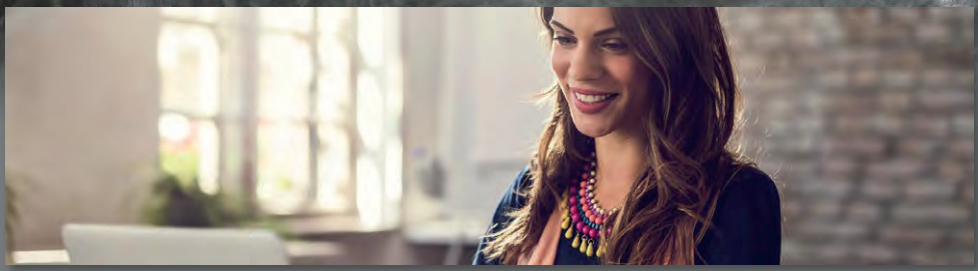
Anyone with any concerns about the welfare of a child can call the **NSPCC Helpline** free on **0808 800 5000** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk,** and more information is also available on the NSPCC website. Children can contact **Childline** on **0800 1111** or visit **childline.org.uk.** If an adult or child is in immediate danger, call **999**.

**Not their real names.*

NSPCC



# (N)EVER (S)TOP LEARNING



When it comes to education, there are no time limits or age restrictions. You may have toyed with the prospect of gaining a new skill, furthering your career or returning to long-term employment through a new qualification but have not known where to start. The return to education is understandably a daunting prospect, and there are a lot of options to choose from.

**Find out what is available**

Research, research, research – look at opportunities available in your area and don't be afraid to call up colleges, universities and training providers to ask questions. Explain what you are interested in doing and ask what you can expect from the course. It is also important to ask what financial and student support is available to you.

Before enquiring, write out a list of what you believe may hold you back from success on a course. Explain your concerns and whether they offer any support concerning your issues – you may be surprised at the extent to which they offer provisions to help adult learners thrive.

**Explore your options**

It is important to find a subject that is of interest to you, and it is also wise to explore what opportunities can arise from you studying or working towards a particular qualification. Can your new qualification allow you access to a new career path, or allow you access to a university?

**Dip your toe in the water**

Some colleges and training providers offer short courses which can give you a taste of student life. For those who have been out of education for a prolonged period, or those not feeling overly confident, this is a good option to help familiarise yourself with an educational environment, before taking the plunge.

**Be brave**

The biggest hurdle many adults face when returning to education is the fear of the unknown. Picking up the phone, sending an email and submitting an application may seem like huge hurdles, but it is natural to be anxious. Be brave - you will thank yourself for the experience.

# Snapchat
## Parent / Carer Advice




## What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is one of the image-based social media platforms which is incredibly popular with children. One of the key features of Snapchat is that, by default, messages sent through Snapchat disappear seconds after they are viewed by the recipient. The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13 but it is a popular and widely used platform among children younger than this.

## Safety Tips

- **As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Snapchat, the importance of not 'oversharing, and any issues they have faced.**
- **The default privacy setting of 'My Friends' prevents children from sharing 'snaps' with users unknown to them. However, children may change this setting and make their posts public. Ensure your child is aware of the importance of maintaining strong privacy settings and check the settings your child has selected.**
- **In the settings options, ensure your child has Snapmap set to 'ghost mode'. This will ensure that nobody can see their current location.**
- **Ask your child if they know how to report or block a user who sends them anything that upsets them. This can be done by going to the friends list, selecting the person creating the issue and then selecting the gear icon.**
- **Remind your child that although Snapchat automatically deletes images once seen, somebody can copy the image and share it with others.**

## Reasons for concern

### Abuse and bullying

As messages disappear shortly after being read, Snapchat has become a popular tool for abuse such as online bullying as abusers feel they will not be held to account for messages posted once they are deleted. This is supported by the fact that if somebody takes a screenshot of a message posted on Snapchat then the person who posted it is informed that this has happened, making it more uncomfortable for people to take evidence of abuse they have suffered or witnessed.

### The Snap Map

The Snap Map allows users to see the live location of their friends on a map. Cartoon-style avatars are used to represent people in a move that was clearly designed to be popular with younger users. This feature can result in children sharing their location (including effectively their home address) with individuals.



### Addiction-inducing features

Children are naturally more prone to addictive behaviour than adults. As such, the inclusion of features such as 'Snap Streaks' (where two users share pictures with each other on consecutive days) encourages addictive behaviour. Snapchat rewards longer streaks with special emojis. This can result in children increasing their daily usage of the app.




### Risk of secondary apps

Snapchat allows users to link to secondary apps that can be used inside Snapchat. A recent concerning example is YOLO which allows users to offer people the opportunity to anonymously ask them questions. Such apps have led to online bullying and hate crime.



OSA
Online Safety Alliance

www.onlinesafetyalliance.org
Online safety education for school staff, pupils and parents

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# How To Reduce Packed Lunch Waste

This month, parents have seen the start of a new school year as millions of children head back to the classroom.

School packed lunches are a popular choice for many parents, who try to keep meals nutritious and low-cost. However, new research from school waste management experts at BusinessWaste.co.uk estimates that some 12,400 tonnes could be left uneaten every year.

£80m of food could be wasted in school packed lunches every year

There are approximately 9,592,534 state school pupils across the UK, and it's estimated that 2,719,499 receive or are eligible for a free school meal, leaving 6,873,035 whose parents must decide how to provide food for the day.

A survey found that around 11% of parents prefer to prepare a packed lunch. However, one study shows that 32.7% of all packed lunches go uneaten, leading to large volumes of food waste.

| Key Finding | Estimate |
|---|---|
| UK children bringing packed lunches | 756,000 |
| Food packed for school lunches each year | 38,100 tonnes |
| Food left uneaten each year | 12,400 tonnes |
| Value of uneaten food each year | £79.9 million |
| Uneaten food per child per school year | 16.5kg |
| Value of uneaten food per child per school year | £106 |

Based on an average packed lunch weight of 265g and a cost of £1.70 per day, our findings suggest that as much as 12,400 tonnes of food waste could be generated from uneaten packed lunches every year; that's equivalent to almost 1,000 double-decker buses worth of food.

It could also mean parents lose an average of £106 per year, or around £2.78 of food every week.

**When scaling to the whole UK, this totals an enormous £79.9 million per year, or £2.1m of packed lunch food wasted every week.**

## How can parents reduce packed lunch waste?

**1. Consult with your children -** *giving children several options instead of just picking for them can help to increase the chances they eat and enjoy their food. Ask for feedback if you find they are bringing back leftovers - was it too much, soggy, warm, difficult to open, or simply something they didn't like?*

**2. Don't automatically replace leftovers -** *it might not be that children don't like the food they are being given, but rather there is too much of it. This way you'll be able to determine if it's the portion size or that it's not appealing.*

**3. Make food easy to eat -** *children often want to spend more time at breaks playing and chatting with friends; make their food easy to navigate by cutting fruit, vegetables and sandwiches into manageable portions and making sure containers are easy to open.*

**4. Choose foods that keep well -** *with packed lunches often made in the morning or the night before, some foods can become soggy, dry or unappealing by lunchtime and therefore more likely to be brought back home. Separate moist and dry foods to prevent sogginess and consider opting for foods with longevity like hard cheeses, whole fruits and baked goods.*

**5. Provide variety -** *children can easily become bored of the same foods. Try to always have some favourites on rotation to keep things interesting. This could be as simple as swapping sandwich fillings, or alternating flavours of snacks.*



Mark Hall, school waste management expert at BusinessWaste.co.uk, comments:

"Our research estimates there is huge food waste generated from uneaten packed lunches, and with the data only applied to the 11% of parents who responded, they always choose packed lunches, the reality could be even higher when accounting for families who choose a mix of both school meals and packed lunches.

"Many parents spend a lot of time curating packed lunches that will be nutritionally beneficial, but this can be wasted when food remains uneaten. It's important to address leftovers with your children, communicating with them to find solutions without being confrontational.

"Food waste is a huge concern not only for its environmental impact but also due to the financial value of lost food. We hope that by estimating the cost to families and across the whole of the UK, we can highlight the issue of school food waste"

*Many thanks to businesswaste.co.uk*



# 10 teacher-approved tips from MyEdSpace

1

### 1. Keep Revision Short and Manageable

For a 10-year-old, sitting down for an hour of independent revision can feel enormous. Start with short bursts of around 10 to 15 minutes. A focused quarter of an hour is often much more productive than a long session where concentration disappears.

2

### 2. Don't Turn Revision into a Punishment

Try to avoid rows, threats or punishments when revision does not happen. That risks teaching children to associate learning with conflict.

3

### 3. Give Them Something Enjoyable to Look Forward To

Before revision starts, plan something enjoyable for them to do once it's done and tell them that's the reward. This gives them a clear finish line to aim for and keeps the atmosphere around studying positive, making it much easier to motivate them to start.

4

### 4. Make Revision part of the Routine

Children are more likely to stick with revision when it becomes a normal part of the week, rather than something that only happens when panic sets in. Pick a regular time and place for 11+ practice so they know what to expect. A consistent routine can make revision feel less daunting and reduce the arguments around getting started.

5

### 5. Praise Effort, Not Test Scores

Try not to make every practice paper about whether they got 70% or 90%. Praise them for concentrating, persevering and learning from mistakes. Children need to understand that ability is something they can improve through practice, rather than something they either have or do not have.

6

### 6. Don't Jump In with the Answer

When your child gets stuck, it can be tempting to tell them

what to do. Instead, give them a little thinking time and ask questions that help them work towards the answer themselves. Learning to persevere when the solution is not immediately obvious is an important exam skill in its own right.

### 7. Ask them to Explain their Answers

A correct answer does not necessarily mean a child fully understands the question. Ask, "How did you work that out?" or get them to teach the method back to you. Explaining their thinking is one of the best ways to reveal whether they really understand a topic.

### 8. Make Revision Interactive

10-year-olds' brains are much different from 18-year-olds'. Independent study works much better for older children, but it's a lot to ask for a 10-year-old who's never done revision before to simply get on with it. Quizzes, live lessons, asking questions aloud or solving problems together can all make revision feel much more engaging.

### 9. Involve them in the Decision-Making Process

You're never going to get your child to revise if you're the one that has to bring the motivation. Talk to them about why they're sitting the 11+ and how they feel about it. Visit prospective schools together and talk to them about what they liked and disliked. A school they are genuinely excited about gives their revision a purpose beyond simply "passing a test".

### 10. Don't Pile on the Pressure

If the exam is approaching and you feel your child is behind, resist the temptation to dramatically increase their workload. Focus on short, regular practice, identify a few areas where they need support and keep the experience in perspective. Confidence, perseverance and understanding are likely to help them far more than a frantic final few weeks.

*Many thanks to MyEdSpace*





# FIVE WAYS TO MAKE UNFAMILIAR FOODS FEEL LESS INTIMIDATING



**Nearly one in three UK parents say fussy eating is the biggest obstacle to getting their children to eat healthier foods, new research reveals.**

A study of 2,000 parents, commissioned by seafood specialist Regal Fish, found that 30% struggle most with their child's efusal to try new foods.

Green vegetables cause the most arguments or resistance, according to half of parents (50%), followed by fish and seafood at 31%. Root vegetables and fruit both create conflict for 21% of families.

When fish is served, more than a quarter of parents (26%) regularly resort to bargaining or persuasion, while 12% say their children refuse to eat it altogether.

Commenting on the findings, Hani Girgis, E-Commerce Manager at Regal Fish, says:
*"Our research highlights a clear gap between what children need for healthy cognitive and social development and what is actually reaching the dinner table.*

*"Parents genuinely want to offer balanced meals, but fears around food waste, prep confidence, and fussy eating create real hesitation. However, almost two in five parents (39%) told us that having access to quick, accessible family recipes would encourage them to introduce more seafood into their child's diet.*

*"Seafood doesn't need to be complicated or stressful to prepare. By leaning on familiar family dishes and approachable cuts like mild salmon or white fish, parents can easily introduce essential Omega-3s into their children's routines without the mealtime struggle."*

Alarmingly, the research also revealed that 87% of children do not currently meet the NHS recommendation to eat two portions of fish per week — with a limited awareness of different varieties of fish. More than a third of parents (35%) had never heard of or seen Sockeye salmon, while 26% did not know it tastes different from other salmon.

Like other oily fish, Sockeye salmon provides Omega-3 fatty acids and is a source of protein and vitamin D, which support a balanced diet.

### 1. START WITH A TASTER PORTION

Instead of placing a full fillet on the plate, serve a small amount alongside familiar foods. This allows children to explore the flavour and texture without feeling pressured to finish a full portion.

### 2. SWAP FISH INTO A MEAL THEY ALREADY ENJOY

Parents do not need to begin with an entirely new recipe. Flaking mild white fish or adding tinned tuna to macaroni cheese, pasta bakes or homemade tacos introduces a new ingredient through a meal children already recognise.

### 3. KEEP FROZEN OR TINNED OPTIONS ON HAND

Parents should remember that fresh fish is not the only option, especially if they are in a time crunch. Tinned fish can be added to pasta, sandwiches, or jacket potatoes, while individually frozen portions allow parents to cook only what they need, reducing the risk of waste.

### 4. PLAN A SECOND MEAL FOR ANY LEFTOVERS

Parents should try and think about how leftovers could be used before cooking as this may make trying fish feel like less of a financial risk.

For instance, cooked fish can be turned into homemade fishcakes or added to pasta, wraps and lunches the following day.

### 5. CHANGE THE TEXTURE BEFORE GIVING UP

A child who rejects a soft, flaky fillet may enjoy the same fish with a crunchy coating. Panko breadcrumbs, homemade herb crusts or a light oven-baked batter can make the texture feel more familiar.



Girgis adds, *"Building healthy, long-term eating habits is a marathon, not a sprint, so try not to feel discouraged if a dish gets rejected on the first attempt.*

*"Patience and a relaxed atmosphere at the dinner table are the most effective tools for helping children build confidence with foods."*

The findings are part of Regal Fish's Food for Thought study, which explores children's eating habits and the barriers parents face when introducing seafood at home.

*Many thanks to Regal Fish*


THANKS FOR READING
NEXT EDITION
OUT IN DECEMBER
Hope you all have a fantastic autumn!