

Blakeney Preschool Parent Information Guide

Understanding Online Safety & Safeguarding Risks

Introduction

At Blakeney Preschool, keeping children safe is our highest priority. This guide is designed to help parents understand a range of safeguarding risks that children may be exposed to both online and within the home environment.

These topics can feel difficult, but awareness and early action help protect children and support families.

1. Online Grooming (Apps and Games)

Online grooming happens when someone builds a relationship with a child to exploit or harm them.

This can occur through:

- Games with chat functions
- Social media apps
- Messaging platforms

Warning signs may include:

- Child becoming secretive about devices
- Unusual messages or new online contacts
- Emotional upset after using devices

What parents can do:

- Use parental controls
 - Check age ratings on apps and games
 - Keep devices in shared family spaces
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2. Sharing Inappropriate Images

Children may be pressured or tricked into sending images.

This can happen through:

- Social media
- Messaging apps
- Gaming platforms

Risks include:

- Loss of control over images
- Bullying or blackmail

Prevention tips:

- Talk openly about online safety
 - Teach children to never share images with strangers
 - Encourage them to tell a trusted adult if something feels wrong
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3. Exposure to Harmful Digital Content

Children may accidentally see:

- Violence
- Sexual content
- Distressing or frightening material

How to reduce risk:

- Use child-safe filters and settings
 - Supervise online activity
 - Use age-appropriate platforms
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4. Inappropriate Touching & Body Safety

Children should be taught:

- The correct names for body parts
- That their body belongs to them
- The difference between safe and unsafe touch

If a child discloses concerns:

- Stay calm

- Listen carefully
 - Report to the preschool immediately
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5. Bullying Behaviours

Bullying can include:

- Physical or verbal harm
- Exclusion from groups
- Online bullying in older children

Signs may include:

- Sudden withdrawal
 - Reluctance to attend preschool
 - Behaviour changes
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6. Imitation of Adult or Sexualised Behaviour

Some children may show behaviour that is not age-appropriate.

This may be linked to:

- Exposure to unsuitable content
- Experiences they do not understand

Important: This does not always mean abuse, but should always be shared with staff.

7. Domestic Abuse

Children may be affected by witnessing abuse at home.

Possible effects:

- Anxiety or fearfulness
- Aggression or withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating

Support is available for families experiencing difficulties.

8. Neglect

Neglect may include:

- Poor hygiene
- Lack of food or sleep
- Inappropriate clothing
- Lack of supervision

Early support can make a significant difference.

9. Parental Substance Misuse

Children may be affected if parents misuse alcohol or drugs.

Possible impacts:

- Inconsistent care routines
 - Emotional insecurity
 - Safety risks at home
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10. Parental Mental Health Difficulties

Mental health challenges can affect family life.

Children may experience:

- Changes in routine or care
- Emotional distress
- Increased responsibility at home

Support services can help families manage these challenges.

11. Financial Abuse or Exploitation in the Home

Financial stress or exploitation can affect a child's wellbeing.

Possible indicators:

- Poor living conditions
- Limited access to basic needs

- Stress within the household
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12. Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation is when someone is influenced to support extreme views.

Although rare in early years, awareness is important.

Warning signs may include:

- Exposure to extreme views at home or online
 - Sudden changes in behaviour or language
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What Parents Should Do If They Are Concerned

If you are worried about any of these issues:

- Speak to Blakeney Preschool staff immediately
 - No concern is too small
 - Early communication helps protect children
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Final Message

At Blakeney Preschool, we work in partnership with families to keep children safe, happy, and supported.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and together we can make a positive difference in every child's life.