

Oak National Academy releases new online safety resources

The Government-backed Oak National Academy has published 80 new lesson plans and other resources to help improve online safety and tackle misogyny. The resources, for pupils aged five and up, are intended to help children deal with harmful online content ranging from explicit sexual material to grooming and radicalisation. The new resources come as Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced an overhaul of sex and relationship education to ensure children are "equipped to defy the malign forces that exist online". Oak National Academy chief executive John Roberts said the resources should help schools address "delicate topics to cover".

[Schools Week](#)

Fathers' campaign secures commitment to suicide prevention lessons

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced that from next September, lessons discussing suicide prevention will be compulsory in all secondary schools. Andy Airey, Mike Palmer, and Tim Owen, three fathers who have each lost a daughter to suicide, have welcomed the announcement after a four-year campaign for the subject to be added to the national curriculum. The three, known as the 3 Dads Walking for their charity efforts, said their "voices have finally been heard". Mr Airey said: "We have covered a lot of ground, literally and figuratively, over the last few years, but to come to a point where a significant change is going to happen still feels quite unreal. I'm stunned."

[BBC News](#)

Rise in online child grooming

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reported 546,000 global cases of adults targeting children online in 2023, a 192% increase. In the UK, 9,600 cases were reported in the first half of 2024, averaging 400 weekly. The NSPCC described these figures as "shocking". Rani Govender from the NSPCC added that such crimes severely impact young victims, sometimes leading to suicide.

[Daily Mirror](#)

UK schools grapple with ketamine rise

New data shows a significant rise in police investigations into ketamine possession and dealing in schools, with cases increasing from three to 15 in just one year. Children as young as 13 have been caught with the drug, prompting concerns from educators and parents alike. The National Drug Treatment Monitoring System reported a rise in under-18s seeking help for ketamine use, reflecting a broader trend of drug abuse among youth.

[Sunday Mirror](#)

Worrying rise in kids using weight-loss drugs

Sophia Money-Coutts claims in the *Daily Telegraph* that weight-loss drugs are increasingly being used in UK boarding schools, with girls as young as 11 reportedly receiving them. The drugs are sometimes obtained without proper oversight: pupils swipe parental credit cards or access them illicitly. Money-Coutts argues this trend reflects deeper societal anxieties around youth weight, school culture, and appearance. She criticises how institutions may encourage or tolerate such medical routes, side-stepping healthy lifestyle support or mental health care.

[Daily Telegraph](#)

Gaming platforms become radicalisation hotspots

Far-right extremists are increasingly using livestream gaming platforms to recruit and radicalise young men, according to a report in *Frontiers in Psychology*. UK crime and counter-terror agencies have warned parents to be vigilant during the summer holidays, as offenders exploit this time to engage with vulnerable youths.

[The Guardian](#)

Smartphones linked with poor mental health in adolescents

Children who own smartphones before age 13 are more likely to experience poorer mental health in early adulthood, according to a global study of over 100,000 young adults. Early smartphone use is linked to higher risks of suicidal thoughts, aggression, low self-worth, disrupted sleep, cyberbullying, and strained family relationships. Experts from Sapient Labs, which led the study, noted the average age of first ownership is falling and urged policymakers to restrict smartphone access for under-13s, comparing it to regulations on alcohol and tobacco.

[Daily Mirror](#)

Safety measures for teens coming to ChatGPT

OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, has announced plans to roll out new protections for teenagers who show signs of distress while interacting with its chatbot. The firm, which is facing legal action over the death of a boy in California whose parents claim was encouraged to take his own life by ChatGPT, said it will link parental accounts with those of their children,

allowing parents to be alerted if their children show signs of acute distress. Campaigners have criticised the measures as inadequate, with Andy Burrows, chief executive of the Molly Rose Foundation, set up following the death of 14-year-old Molly Russell, said it is "unforgiveable for products to be put on to the market before they are safe for young people - only to retrospectively make small efforts to make them safer".

The Guardian

Spice found in vapes at schools

Research examining 1,923 e-cigarettes and e-liquids from 114 secondary schools across England has found that 13% contained the synthetic drug Spice, with rates rising to 25% in London and Lancashire. Spice-laced vapes are widely available online, often mislabelled as containing THC, though they actually contain the cheaper and far more dangerous substance. Professor Chris Pudney of Bath University noted that Spice is easily found on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, with dealers operating hundreds of accounts. Young users, often mistaking it for cannabis, face serious health risks including psychosis, seizures, and heart problems due to Spice's highly addictive and unpredictable effects. Researchers are urging Ofcom to enforce the Online Safety Act to compel social media companies to remove accounts selling drugs, with the regulator empowered to issue substantial fines for non-compliance.

[Sky News](#) [BBC News](#) [Daily Express](#) [London Evening Standard](#) [Metro](#) [Mirror.co.uk](#) [The Independent UK](#)