

Updates:

### **Teachers urged to warn children about "sextortion" scams**

Teachers are being urged to warn children about the increasing threat of "sextortion" scams, where criminal gangs target them and demand payment to prevent the release of explicit photos. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) reported a doubling of cases in the UK last year, with 91% of victims being male. The National Crime Agency's (NCA) child exploitation and online protection (CEOP) team has issued guidance to teachers on how to spot the signs of this abuse. The number of global cases reported to the US National Center for Missing and Exploited Children also doubled, with many victims being boys aged 14 to 18. The NCA has highlighted the devastating impact of sextortion, urging victims to seek help and support. The IWF has called for schools to take action and has highlighted the "Report Remove" tool, which allows victims to stop the sharing of sexual imagery online.

[BBC News](#) [Daily Telegraph](#) [London Evening Standard](#) [The Guardian](#) [The Independent UK](#) [The Times](#)

## **SAFEGUARDING**

### **Social media apps will be ordered to tame harmful algorithms to keep young safe online**

Under new rules by Ofcom, social media apps including Instagram and TikTok will be ordered to "tame aggressive algorithms" which push harmful content to children. They will also be told to install tough age checks to stop children from accessing pornography and content that promotes suicide, self-harm and eating disorders. It is part of efforts from Ofcom to clean up social media and search engines under powers created by the Online Safety Act. The regulator will have the powers to fine firms who fail to co-operate £18m or 10% of global revenue, block their services and start criminal proceedings against senior managers. Dame Melanie Dawes, Ofcom's chief executive, said: "In line with new online safety laws, our proposed codes firmly place the responsibility for keeping children safer on tech firms. They will need to tame aggressive algorithms that push harmful content to children in their personalised feeds and introduce age-checks so children get an experience that's right for their age."

[The Daily Telegraph](#) [The Times](#)

### **Experts warn of rising knife crime in schools**

Experts have warned that youth knife crime is on the rise and violence on the streets is now "overspilling into schools". Patrick Green, CEO of the Ben Kinsella Trust, an anti-knife crime charity, said: "Knife crime is an emergency and has been for a long time. It is up seven percent in the last year, almost doubling in the past decade. Violence is now overspilling into the school environment and it reflects what we see outside of the school gates." He said that one of the biggest factors driving the number of schoolchildren carrying knives is "disproportionate fear". He explained: "Every time there is an attack in and around a school, it is a shocking event, but schools are safe places and significant safeguarding goes on within the school environment. Children are often much safer inside schools than outside." Julie Waite, cofounder of Streetwise Defence, an organisation that provides safety defence training in schools, agreed. "Fear is the driver behind knife crime and specifically knife crime in schools." She explained: "Young people are scared they will be attacked and think the answer is to carry a knife too."

[Daily Mirror](#)

### **'Duty to report' law excludes doctors, teachers, and nurses**

Tougher laws to protect children from sexual abuse will not apply to doctors, teachers or nurses, causing outrage among campaigners, lawyers, and survivors. The "duty to report" legislation, falling short of recommendations by the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse, has been criticised as a confused and contradictory sham. The legislation only applies to "officers of the crown" and does not mandate reporting of suspicions or indicators of abuse. Campaigners argue that the new law will not significantly change the behavior of those responsible for the care of children and will make almost no difference to the number of child sexual abuse reports made. The government's own estimates suggest an increase of just 1% to 3% in the number of reports.

[BBC News](#) [The Guardian](#)

### **Vape-spiking pose new threat to schoolchildren**

Vape-spiking cases in the UK are a "new threat", with schoolchildren among those falling victim to the offence, it has been told. Police warned they are increasingly concerned after officers found devices containing substances such as THC, the main active ingredient in cannabis, and spice, a powerful synthetic drug. The Met's chief licensing officer, Ian Graham, said Scotland Yard is "aware of vapes being used at school and of young people being spiked there". One headteacher said pupils had fallen seriously ill after using spiked vapes. A report from Action on Smoking and Health found that almost half (47%) of the young people surveyed said their main source of procuring vapes was other people, rather than purchasing the devices.

[The Daily Telegraph](#)

### **Quarter of children believe carrying a knife makes them safer**

A new survey has found that a quarter of children think that carrying a knife for protection will make them feel safer on the streets. The Ben Kinsella Trust, the anti-knife crime charity, found that nearly one in ten young people said that they had considered carrying a blade, with secondary school children more likely to have carried a knife or know someone who has done

so. The survey also found that over a third (36%) of children said that they did not feel safe in the area in which they live. Patrick Green, chief executive of the charity, said: "We need to dig deeper, understand how these influences affect different young people in unique ways. By getting to the root causes, we can dismantle the negative pressures that push young people towards knives."

*The Times*

### **Over 12% of children worldwide victims of online sexual abuse**

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh have found that more than 12% of children worldwide have experienced sexual abuse on the internet. The study estimates that around 300m children are victims of online sexual abuse and exploitation each year. Additionally, surveys conducted as part of the research revealed that 1.8m men in Britain have engaged in online offending against children. Childlight, the organisation behind the research, emphasises the importance of treating online child sexual abuse as a public health issue that can be prevented. The study also found that many men admitted they would commit physical sexual offenses against children if they believed it would remain secret.

*Sky News* *Daily Telegraph*