INCLUSIVE Digital Safety

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Children and young people with SEND may face additional challenges online. Below we share some research and insights into how this may affect their wellbeing and safety.[1]

In this research children and young people with SEND identified with the following statements:

"I have learning difficulties"

"I have other forms of special educational needs"

"I have a physical disability"

"I have vision difficulties"

"I have a long-standing illness"

Predicted risks

Children and young people's offline vulnerabilities can be used as a predictor for their online vulnerabilities.

Young people with SEND are significantly vulnerable to all high-risk online scenarios - contact, content, conduct and cyber scams. Physical disability is an indicator of conduct risks .

Special Educational Needs are an indicator for contact online risks. Experiencing contact online is then a predictor for further online harms:

- Exposure to harmful content
- Experiencing conduct risks
- Higher networking use
- Experiencing cyber aggression

Key Insights

Young people with special educational needs:

More than **one in five** of those with learning difficulties has often seen comments or messages containing violence, hatred or racist views[1]

26% of young people with learning difficulties say they feel 'addicted' to their phone and **26%** often get irritated or anxious without their phone[1]

27% view sites promoting self-harm compared to **17%** of non-vulnerable peers

25% often view pro anorexia sites compared to **17%** of non-vulnerable peers

Young people with learning difficulties were **one third more likely** to spend more than 5 hours a day online

One third more likely to have their social media account hacked

One third more likely to say they were not taught how to stay safe online[2]

Significantly more likely to say they never follow online safety advice if taught

Young people with physical disabilities:[1]

Over half reported spending over 5 hours per day online

Over one third had experienced their social media account being hacked

Parents **least likely** to limit screen time

54% said parents had taught them how to stay safe online

32% said online safety advice or education was not good enough or useless

More likely to visit sites with adult content than their peers

[1] **Vulnerable Children in a Digital World**

Risks explained

Conduct risks are associated with:

- use of chat rooms
- looking at pages meant for adults
- visiting gambling sites
- downloading music without paying

Content risks involve visiting or being exposed to websites that:

- urge young people to be very thin
- talk about self-harming or suicide
- promote hatred or racist views
- give dangerous advice
- sell illegal goods
- show nude pictures or videos that weren't searched for
- show very violent pictures or videos that young people didn't want to see

Victims of **cyber scams** *have experienced abuse of their personal data and tend to agree with statements such as:*

- My social media account has been hacked
- My personal details have been stolen or hacked
- I've had credit card details stolen and used
- I've been tricked into paying money for something I did not want to buy
- I've been tricked into buying fake goods

Contact risks have high risk online relationships involving sexting with reasons for doing so including:

- being pressured / blackmailed to do it
- being tricked into it
- being in a relationship and pressured to or wanting to share nudes
- sharing due to threats
- trying it for fun

Cyber aggression: online aggression that isn't always viewed as bullying. It can include comments, insults or threats due to appearance, race, religion, sexuality, gender or disability. It may also include threats to harm a person or their family

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