

## Specific Decisions – Internet and Social Media Use

### Carrying out the Assessment

#### Relevant information could include:

- *Information and images (including videos) which you share on the internet or through social media could be shared more widely, including with people you don't know, without you knowing or being able to stop it.*
- *It is possible to limit the sharing of personal information or images (and videos) by using privacy and location settings on some internet and social media sites (there is no expectation that the person understands the precise details or mechanisms of the privacy settings).*
- *If you place material or images (including videos) on social media sites which are rude or offensive, or share those images, other people might be upset or offended (this includes: forwarding an email, uploading to a file-sharing platform, uploading to a site that other people have access to, and possessing with a view to distributing).*
- *Some people you meet or communicate with online, who you don't otherwise know, may not be who they say they are (they may disguise, or lie about themselves); someone who calls themselves a 'friend' on social media may not be friendly.*
- *Some people you meet or communicate with online, who you don't otherwise know, may pose a risk to you; they may lie to you, or exploit or take advantage of you sexually, financially, emotionally and/or physically; they may want to cause you harm.*
- *If you look at or share extremely rude or offensive images, messages, or videos online you may get into trouble with the police, because you may have committed a crime.*
- *Consideration about passwords, and the consequences of sharing those passwords (especially if they are shared with people that P doesn't necessarily know, or with those who could have other motives and use the account for criminal purposes without P's knowledge).*
- *Consideration needed in relation to a person's understanding around the consequences of downloading explicit images, or possibly a virus from an unknown link/sender? What if they are asked (or pressurised) into downloading software which causes information to be hacked or stolen?*

### Understanding the relevant information

After giving the person **the relevant information** potential questions to ask:

- *Is it a good idea or bad idea to put your address and phone number on your profile (ask the person to explain their answer)?*
- *Is it a good idea or a bad idea to accept a friend request from someone you don't know (ask the person to explain their answer)?*
- *Can other people see photos/videos that you post?*
- *How do you stop images/videos/posts from being seen by strangers?*
- *Can you stop a friend from sharing a message or image you have posted (on Facebook/Instagram etc)?*

- *Can you show me how to block/unfriend someone?*
- *Can you show me how to turn privacy & location settings on/off?*
- *Have you ever sent/posted images or videos that upset another person? Why do think they were upset?*
- *Have you ever sent/posted a message that upset another person? Why do you think they were upset?*
- *Is it possible that a person you met online is not actually who they say they are? If so, why do you think they are pretending to be somebody else?*
- *Is it possible that a person you met online might want to harm you? If so, how?*
- *What kind of images/videos/messages could get you into trouble with the Police?*

Depending upon the person's answers to the above questions, you may need to ask further probing questions or explain the relevant information in a different way. If the person struggles to understand your questions or has communication difficulties limiting their ability to answer open questions, it would then be appropriate to switch to closed questions requiring a yes or no response. For example:

- *Can images and videos you put online be shared with strangers?*
- *Can your messages/posts be shared with strangers?*
- *Do privacy & locations settings stop images and videos from being shared with strangers?*
- *Could a person you chat to online lie about themselves?*
- *Could an online friend try and trick you (refer to a specific person, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns about them)?*
- *Is everyone you chat to/meet online your friend?*
- *Could a person who is nice to you online be a bad person (refer to a specific person, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns about them)?*
- *Could a person you chat to online, want to harm you or take advantage of you?*
- *Are you allowed to send threatening or abusive messages (e.g. threatening to hurt someone who has upset or annoyed you)?*
- *Could you get into trouble with the Police if you look at or share extremely rude or offensive pictures/videos online (give examples)?*
- *Could you get into trouble if you took a picture of your private parts and sent it to someone you met online?*

It is important when asking closed questions to check the consistency of the person's replies. This could be achieved by asking the following true or false questions, for example:

- *Images or videos you put online are private and can't be shared with strangers.*
- *The messages you send to your friends are private and can never be shared with strangers.*
- *Privacy settings can help stop images and videos from being shared with strangers.*
- *Location settings can help stop strangers knowing where you are.*
- *People you chat to tell the truth online always about themselves.*

- *An online friend would never lie to you or try to trick you (refer to a specific person, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns about them).*
- *A person you chat to/meet online is always a friend.*
- *A person who is nice to you online is always a good person (refer to a specific person, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns about them)?*
- *A person that you chat to online might want to harm you e.g. by telling you to give them money or telling you to send them a picture of your private parts.*
- *You might get into trouble with the Police if you send threatening or abusive messages to a person who has upset or annoyed you.*
- *Some pictures and videos are illegal, and you could get into trouble with the Police if you view or share them (give examples).*
- *You wouldn't get into trouble if you took a picture of your private parts and sent it to a friend.*

### **Use or weigh the relevant information**

Potential questions to ask include:

- *How do you keep yourself safe online?*
- *Why do you think others are concerned about your contact with X (a person they met online)?*
- *Why do you think others are concerned about you using the internet/Facebook/Snapchat etc?*
- *What do you enjoy about using the internet (refer to specific websites or social media platforms)? What do you dislike?*
- *Has someone you met online ever asked you to do something that is illegal? What happened? Why did you make that particular choice?*
- *Has someone you met online ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable? What did you decide to do? Why?*
- *How would you feel about having someone sitting with you whilst you use the internet (e.g. support worker)? What would the advantages/disadvantages be?*
- *X person (a person they met online and poses a risk to them) is actually Y person – why do you think they are pretending to be somebody else?*
- *How could X person (a person they met online and poses a risk to them) try to harm you?*
- *What would you do if a person you met online asked for your phone number?*
- *What would you do if a person you met online wanted to meet you in person? If you agreed to meet, how would you keep yourself safe?*
- *What would you do if someone you met online asked you to send them money?*
- *What would you do if someone you met online asked you to send them a picture of your private parts?*
- *What would you do if someone you met online sent you a picture of their private parts (or other potentially illegal content)?*

**This list of questions is not exhaustive and should not replace your professional judgement, where needed take advice from your line manager. It may also be appropriate to consider internal legal advice.**

**We would like to gratefully acknowledge the guide has been developed from Leicestershire County Council's "MCA How to Guide"**