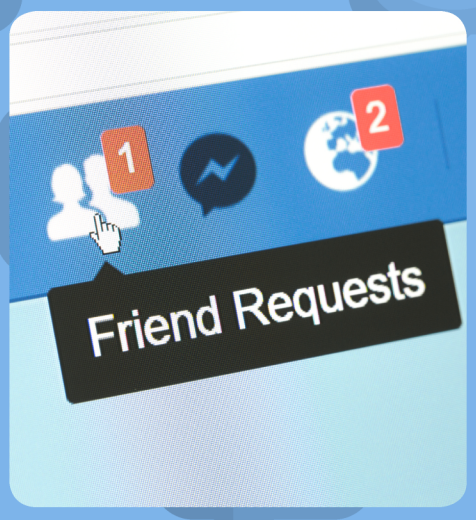
At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

The whole concept of social media relies upon users having friends and/or followers. 'Friends' tend to be those with whom users will share their own personal profile. It's usually a mutual relationship with both parties able to engage and interact with everything their friends post online. 'Followers' on the other hand can typically be just one-way relationships and, dependent on the platform, only provide access to certain aspects of an individual's profile, such as a person's content feed. A common trait that often exists between the two however is the desire to gather as many friends or followers as possible.



What parents need to know about SOCIAL PRESSURES LINKED TO 'FRIENDS & FOLLOWERS'





POSSIBLE 'FRIEND ENVY'

Children may compare the number of friends or followers that they have with their own online friends and people they know. In some cases, this could lead to 'friend envy', particularly if they see this as a sign of popularity. This could lead to your child showing signs of jealously and resorting to sending friend requests to people they don't know that well, or even strangers, in a desperate bid to increase their own status online.

COLLECTING 'FAKE' FRIENDS

Children who feel under pressure to increase their friend count or want to increase their following as quickly as possible can be vulnerable to collecting 'fake' friends. They may, for example, accept friend requests from people they don't know very well or from complete strangers, inadvertently leaving themselves open to online bullies, trolls or even the possibility of being groomed.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Another way that children can increase their following is by leaving their accounts open so that they can be easily found, and anybody can view their posts. This is in the hope that other users will like their posts and decide to follow them, therefore increasing their numbers. Once again, this can leave your child vulnerable to being followed by strangers or people who have dishonest intentions.

CONSTANT NEED TO PLEASE

As children start to gain more friends or an increasing number of followers, they might start to feel an added level of pressure to provide them with more interesting and likeable content. Almost as if they now have an audience waiting, this constant need to please may be an extra burden that pushes your child into oversharing personal information or posting material that is inappropriate or offensive, inaccurately portraying what they're actually like in the offline world.

FEELINGS OF REJECTION

Just like increasing friends and followers can bring a sense of happiness and satisfaction, so the loss of friends and followers can cause children to suffer feelings of sadness and rejection. Depending on how invested your child is in their social media activities, this could influence their attitude and behaviour offline and potentially have a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Safety Tips For Parents

BE THEIR FRIEND OR FOLLOWER

The best way to know who your child is friends with online or who follows them is to be their friend or follower yourself. This will allow you to see who your child is engaging with most online or open up discussions about how they know certain people they've added to their network who you haven't heard them speak about before or you yourself don't know.

TURN ON PRIVACY CONTROLS

All social media platforms have their own privacy controls which can be used to help protect children online. For instance, removing the ability for strangers to comment on public posts or having a screening process for friend or follow requests is good practice which can help to ensure your child's experience online is a safer one.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

If privacy measures have been put in place, then usually your child will receive a notification if somebody tries to befriend them online. Talk to your child about making sure they don't open up their personal life to people they don't know and that if they are ever in any doubt, they should never accept a friend request from a stranger.

BEHAVE ONLINE AS THEY WOULD OFFLINE

Your child's behaviour online should always be treated as an extension of their behaviour offline. Discuss with your child the pitfalls of trying to be somebody they're not and that trying to please everybody will only make them unhappy. Tell them that they should be proud of who they are and that they should always behave in an appropriate and responsible way when posting content online.

TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE VALUE OF REAL FRIENDSHIP

Social media can often distort what true relationships and friendships should actually be like. It's important to teach your child the value of true friendships and that meeting and speaking to people face to face in the real world, offline, is often a better way to build a more trusting and confident relationship with someone rather than just speaking to them online.

DISCUSS WHAT BEING POPULAR ACTUALLY IS

A higher number of followers can be a measure of popularity but can also lack substance beyond just the number itself. Discuss with your child that popularity can come and go and that a large number of followers doesn't necessarily mean a large number of friends, particularly online where the real value in a relationship cannot be accurately determined.

Meet our expert



Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.

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DIVE IN & JOIN DEVIZES AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB

Learn. Train. Compete. Belong.



ABOUT US

At Devizes ASC, we help swimmers of all ages learn, improve, stay active and develop a lifelong love of swimming. We meet throughout the year at Devizes Leisure Centre.

GET INVOLVED

We are run by volunteers. Help with coaching, galas, events or committee roles.

LEARN TO SWIM

- Ages 5 years and over, including adults
- Tuesday lessons
- Levels 1–4: 6:00–6:30 pm
- Levels 5–8: 6:30–7:00 pm

Adult Learn to Swim

- Sundays 4:00–4:30 pm
- Adults £15 a session

COMPETITIVE SQUAD

- For swimmers aged 10+ ready to train competitively
- Tuesday: 8:00–9:30 pm
- Sunday: 4:30–6:00 pm
- Wiltshire Moonraker Summer & Winter Leagues

PRICES

£26 A MONTH

Additional sessions £17.50

Two months' cancellation notice

SCAN TO JOIN

enquiries.dasc@gmail.com | www.devizesasc.com

Wiltshire Family Hubs

Family Hub Wiltshire Council | All Together Supporting families in Wiltshire

Issue 9 - 2026

www.wiltshirefamilyhubs.org.uk

Family Hub focus on :

Our Navigation Team

Sometimes families need a little extra support, advice, or simply someone to talk things through with.

Wiltshire Family Hub's Family Navigator service offers friendly, practical support for families with children and young people aged 0-18, or up to 25 with SEND. Our Family Navigators help families access local services, community support, and opportunities, providing guidance when it's needed most.



Signposting to specialist support- Connecting families with organisations that can provide expert advice on areas such as housing, debt management, health concerns and emotional wellbeing.





Community connections - Helping parents and carers discover local opportunities such as toddler groups, youth clubs, adult learning courses and free community events.



Practical Paperwork - Support Providing guidance with completing school, pre-school, and college applications, as well as helping families navigate complex forms and paperwork.



A Listening Ear - Offering a welcoming space where families can talk through concerns, explore available options, and find the right support when they are unsure where to turn.

Family Navigators can be found at:

- Libraries,
- Family Hubs,
- School gates
- Community events and MORE!

Where?

Go to the Family Navigator locations on our website

Toy Safety



How to check if your toy is safe

If you're unsure about the safety of a toy, here are some checks you can do:

- Check battery compartments for accessible button batteries or loose spares in the box
- Check for any loose small magnets
- Give the parts on the toy a quick tug and check for small parts that come off
- Look for long cords or access to stuffing
- Check if there are any age restrictions or safety warnings on the product

Click here for more info

child accident prevention trust

Contact us by email:
wiltshirefamilyhubs@spurgeons.org

Contact us by phone:
0800 970 4669

Family Hub
Wiltshire Council

All Together
Supporting families in Wiltshire

In partnership with...
Spurgeons
Together with families

Wiltshire Council

Facebook

Our Wiltshire Family Hub Facebook page is another way for families to stay up to date like and follow to stay in touch with us.

Simply click here:

Support We Offer

We are here to help with a whole range of topics including:

Ideas around implementing routines and setting boundaries.

Help to understand your child's needs and build your confidence as a parent.

Help around finances, housing applications, debt support and accessing benefits.

Support for healthy relationships

Volunteering opportunities

Healthy Start vitamins and vouchers

Advice on local childcare and applying for funding.

Introductions to other services

Sensory Play Spaces (Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge)

Baby Wardrobe Project (Clothing for children 0-12 months)

Get in touch with us

If you have any questions or would like more information about our services please call us on one of our numbers below or check out our website:

Freephone:
0800 970 4669

wiltshirefamilyhubs@spurgeons.org

Other useful numbers:

Health visitor – Single Point of Access
0300 247 0090

National Breastfeeding helpline
0300 100 0212

Fearfree (Domestic Abuse support Service)
01225 775276

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247

For access to our Family Navigators check out our drop in timetable HERE

For information about our parenting courses please go HERE

Click here to visit our website

BEST START IN LIFE

www.wiltshirefamilyhubs.org.uk