



Thursday 18th January, 2024

Dear Parents,

Safeguarding Update

It has come to our attention that a number of our children are watching YouTube videos featuring a character called "Jeffy".

We need to make you aware of this (if you are not already) as it poses a safeguarding risk for our children. Despite the video's child-friendly animation style, online safety experts have found videos portraying sexual content, nudity, violence, gore, profanity and more inappropriate themes.

We are also aware that at least one of our children have brought a Jeffy 'puppet' into school with them and I need to make it clear that this is not appropriate and we do not want these brought into school.

Below is some further information (from "Safer Schools") about this character and the videos in case you were unaware of the content and themes of that feature. There are lots of websites with resources to help you to keep your children safe online, for example the NSPCC provide a range of guides to support you setting up parental controls etc. The CEOP site is also recommended and has a range of articles and advice. Both websites are listed below;

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

CEOP: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>

Many thanks for your support with this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jodie Flynn', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Mrs Jodie Flynn
Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead

SAFEGUARDING GUIDE ...



Here's what you need to know...

What is Jeffy?

Jeffy is a puppet character featured in series of YouTube videos. The channel behind Jeffy has over five million subscribers and each video posted gains millions of views.

The character of Jeffy has been criticised for portraying an offensive stereotype of someone with unspecified learning difficulties or disability. The creator has argued against this characterisation, saying Jeffy is meant to be funny and does not represent someone with a disability.

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In 2017, a mother found her 7-year-old son with a ligature around his neck, mimicking actions they had seen in a Jeffy video. The noose was safely removed, and the creator of Jeffy apologised, adding that the videos are: "not to be imitated and are for entertainment purposes only".

What are the risks of Jeffy and other adult-animations to children and young people?

- As the style of these animations is similar to other videos they view, children and young people may click onto content without realising it contains harmful material.
- Even after viewing, a child may not realise how problematic the behaviour they've viewed is if they believe they are watching an age-appropriate cartoon.
- Children and young people may copy behaviours and language they have viewed. This is not exclusive to the home environment as some content shows settings outside of the home, for example Jeffy at school.
- When exposed to inappropriate content, such as sexualised content, children may struggle to explain to an adult what they have seen and/or what is upsetting them, or they may worry they will get into trouble.

Top Tips

- Stay calm. If you suspect the child or young person in your care has watched Jeffy or other inappropriate cartoon-style content, don't panic. Approach them calmly, ask open questions and listen. Importantly, avoid mentioning Jeffy or similar animations by name as you may be accidentally alerting them to something they knew nothing about!
- Talk to them. If you know for sure they have viewed inappropriate content, ask them to explain what they have seen and give them space to tell you in their own words. It may be emotional or embarrassing to discuss, but being able to talk through complex feelings in a supportive environment will help them.
- Never leave the safeguarding to someone else. Even though platforms like YouTube have age restrictions and moderators, they are not perfect and should not be relied upon to keep the child or young person in your care safe online.
- Identify help. It's important that children and young people have someone they can turn to for help, even if that person is not you, remind them that they can talk to any of the adults at school who will offer them a supportive response.
- Check safety settings. Ensure the correct safety settings are in place on the devices your child has access to and use the Online Safety Centre to learn how to restrict content, block and report on the platform.
- Keep the conversation going. Your child's online safety should be an ongoing discussion. Just as you would ask questions about their offline life, make their online experiences just as regular a topic in your household or the classroom.