



# Safeguarding newsletter

February 2024

The aim of the newsletter is to share, key related information, in an effort, to better improve communication between the Academy and you as parents / carers.



## Disposable vape ban: 'It can't come soon enough'

**“The motivation here is to help ensure that children and young people are not dragged into this addiction to nicotine, which sadly, these vapes can mean for children, young people.”**

The government is also seeking to make vaping less appealing to children by restricting sweet and fruity flavours, introducing plain packaging and making displays less visible in shops.

The changes, decided after a consultation in which there was 70% backing for the disposable vape ban, are expected to come into effect towards the end of this year or in early 2025.

### What does the ban propose?

Restricting the flavours and descriptions of vapes so they are no longer targeted at children

Keeping vapes out of sight of children in shops

Regulating vape packaging so they are not targeted at children

Exploring whether increasing the price of vapes will reduce the number of young people using them

Considering restricting the sale of disposable vapes, which ministers say are clearly linked to the rise in vaping in children and are incredibly harmful to the environment

# Online Safety and the Dark web



## What's what

### The World Web (Open Web):

The world web is the public facing side to the internet which is used commonly. This includes public facing websites and resources. Only 4% of internet information is hosted through the world web.

### The Deep Web:

The deep web is hidden from initial public view and has limited access via search engines. For example, mailing lists held by a company would be part of the deep web. 90% of information is held in the deep web.

### The Dark Web:

The dark web refers to an area of the internet that can only be accessed through particular software. This means networks are encrypted repeatedly, making a user anonymous. 6% of internet information is on the dark web.

## **How do people access the Dark Web?**

The Dark Web can be accessed through particular software and programmes. The most common of these is called TOR (The Onion Router). The software anonymises the user through directing all requests to a centralised source, and randomly redirecting it. It is known as "The Onion Router" as it promises layers of encryption, meaning a user could not be traced.

## **Why would young people use the Dark Web?**

**Anonymity:** Young people may want to remain anonymous in their online interactions. This might be because they don't trust the surveillance of the internet.

**To reach "Hidden Services":** A hidden service is one where not only the user, but also the website itself, has their anonymity protected by TOR.

**Illegal activity:** Young people may access the dark web for illegal purposes. Child Criminal Exploitation includes grooming and coercing children to use the dark web to buy or sell drugs, weapons and stolen items. Young people could also be seeking information around extremist views which is less available on the open web.

## **Why is it a safeguarding concern?**

**Anonymity:** There are a wide range of "forums" within the dark web that a young person could be accessing anonymously. These include suicide "advice" pages, pages that promote self-harm, pro-bulimia, and pro-anorexia forums. In addition, the level of anonymity that the dark web offers means that perpetrators of child abuse have their identity hidden. This means that policing and investigating these spaces is inherently problematic.

**Hidden services:** The access to hidden services poses a risk to young people as it exposes them to a wide variety of items and content that would not be permissible on the open web. This can include illegal drugs, weapons, explicit imagery or indecent images of children.

**Illegal activity:** Being able to access and buy illicit materials puts a young person's safety and physical health at risk. It also connects young people to criminals who may seek to exploit them. For young people who may be seeking information around extremist views, it also connects them with individuals who may seek to exploit them.

## Understanding a young person's use of the dark web

Many young people view their digital self as an extension of their identity and sense of self.

Therefore, it's crucial that we are supporting young people digitally.

To access the dark web requires knowledge and know how. To access hidden services and to establish anonymity requires a level of skill. It is likely to not be by chance. Therefore, understanding the motivations as to why a young person is accessing these encrypted parts of the web can tell us a lot and must be taken in context.

## Talking to young people about the Dark Web

Knowledge gaps between professionals and the young people they support may be apparent when it comes to online activity. Building up awareness over such issues could facilitate smoother conversations. Remember, that young people may not necessarily be using the dark web for illicit reasons and that equivalent risks exist on the open web.

**Dialogue:** Open a dialogue about how young people use and view the internet and avoid expressing judgment about their decisions even if they include use of the dark web. Consider discussing what aspects they enjoy about being connected, what kind of websites they like, ask how they stay safe online and explore what they would do if they saw something that made them uncomfortable.

**Privacy:** It may be that young people are using TOR as they are concerned about their online privacy. In this case there are alternatives you can explore such as using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for additional online security. It would also be valuable to discuss how and why some people use privacy to inflict harm.

**Support:** What is most important is that young people have a trusted adult to talk to and know where to go if they come across something that worries them or makes them feel uncomfortable in the dark or open web and in their use of social media. Make sure they know they can come to you no matter how or where they have accessed concerning content.

# Community news

- Children can eat out for less this #HalfTerm, with one popular supermarket offering a hot meal for as little as 60p. In-store cafes and restaurants have plenty of offers on to help families save some much-needed cash during the school holidays.
- Tesco shoppers can get one free kids' hot dish, breakfast or pick and mix deal with each item purchased by an adult, which could be as little as 60p. However Tesco Clubcard must be shown at the till.
- Over at Asda, children can get a hot meal for £1 all day with no adult spend required, The Sun reports. Dishes include pasta, margherita pizza and a half jacket potato.
- Sainsbury's is offering children a free hot meal or lunch bag, worth £3.50, when an adult hot main is purchased, with prices starting from £5.40. Morrisons also gives children a free meal all year round when adults spend £4.50 or more on a meal.
- Elsewhere, those visiting Ikea can bag a child's 95p pasta meal daily from 11am, with the price dropping to 45p on Fridays for those with a family card. Dunelm also offers children a free mini main, two snacks and a drink with every £4 spend.
- This half-term, free children's meals are also available at Greene King pubs, Cafe Rouge, Las Iguanas, Bill's, Yo Sushi, TGI Fridays and Dobbies garden centres with every adult meal purchased. Alternatively, Bella Italia allows youngsters under 11 to eat for £1 with any adult main bought between 4pm to 6pm, Sunday to Wednesday, or free all day Thursday.
- Sizzling Pubs have a £1 kids meal deal available from 3pm Monday to Friday when buying an adult main meal and a free breakfast is available for kids at Beefeater and Brewers Fayre when an adult one is purchased for £9.99.
- Whitbread Inns allow two kids under 16 to eat for free with every adult breakfast purchased, while two under 15 have access to an unlimited hot breakfast for free at Travelodge when one adult breakfast is bought for £8.99. For those on the go, McDonald's is also offering Mr Men and Little Miss Happy Meals for £1.99 via its app during the school break.