SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

Primary| March 2024

St Joseph
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

In this month's issue:

- Child-on-child abuse
- Tips for holding off letting your child have a social media account
- App focus: WhatsApp

Understanding Child-on-Child Abuse

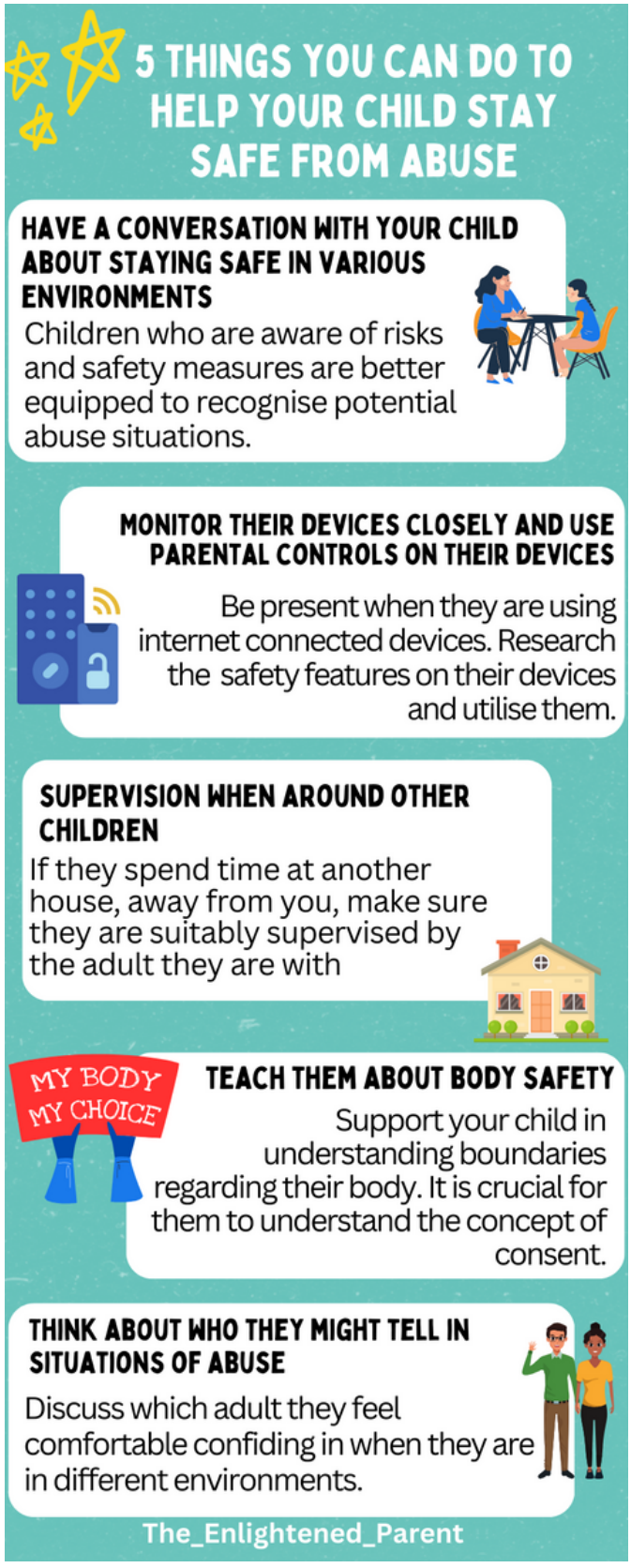
Child-on-child abuse refers to any inappropriate behaviour between children that is abusive in nature. This type of abuse is so named because it typically involves individuals who are similar in age or developmental stages.

Child-on-child abuse can occur either in-person or online, and it can happen anywhere – at school, in the park, or even within the confines of a child's own home via internet-connected devices. This type of abuse encompasses physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, harassment, exploitation, bullying, coercive control, and initiation rituals.

It is important to keep in mind that child-on-child abuse can cause harm to both the victim and the perpetrator. There is often a complex web of reasons why a child may engage in abusive behaviour towards another.

Spotting the signs that your child may be experiencing abuse:

- noticeable change in behaviour
- not wanting to go to school or spend social time with specific friends
- withdrawn or mood changes
- changes in the times spent online
- asking for money or giving belongings away/losing belongings



SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Delaying Your Child's Access to Social Media

In light of recent tragic incidents involving children, there is a growing push to restrict social media access until the age of 16. Various reports link social media to these incidents, prompting concerns about its negative effects on children. Despite this, more primary school children are creating their own accounts or using those managed by parents.

If you would prefer your child not to engage in social media at a young age, how can you address this with them, especially when their friends are already active on these platforms?

WhatsApp: The Risks and Safety Features

Whilst WhatsApp may market some of its features as protecting the privacy of users, they also put children in a vulnerable position.

- End-to-end encryption means that only people in the chat can read the messages; this also means that chats cannot be monitored for illegal activity.
- Live location sharing can be useful but it also means that children and young people can put themselves in a vulnerable position by sharing their location to people they don't really know.
- View once allows content to be sent and read by users only once before disappearing. This leaves children and young people vulnerable to being sent inappropriate content and not being able to report it as it has disappeared.
- Disappearing messages means that content disappears after either 24 hours, 7 days or 90 days. This may encourage a user to send more risky content as they believe it will disappear. It can be forwarded or a screenshot taken within that time and, therefore, shared with others .

Tips on keeping your child safe on WhatsApp:

- Check privacy settings (click the cog) to see what information is currently shared .
- Talk to your child about what to do if someone they don't know contacts them (they should tell you).
- Have open conversations about what is appropriate and inappropriate content to share.

©The Enlightened Practitioner

Click for The Enlightened Parent