

ICS Safeguarding Newsletter 5

Neglect - The Hidden Harm

When we think about safeguarding, many of us picture protecting children from physical harm or online dangers. Yet one of the most common, and sometimes most damaging, forms of harm is neglect. Unlike a bruise or an unkind message, neglect can be harder to spot. It often happens gradually and quietly, but its effects can be lifelong.

The Five Main Types of Neglect

1. **Physical neglect:** Not providing adequate food, clothing, or shelter, or failing to supervise a child properly.
2. **Emotional neglect:** Ignoring a child's need for love, support, and encouragement, or exposing them to constant criticism.
3. **Medical neglect:** Failing to provide necessary medical or dental care, including ignoring health advice.
4. **Educational neglect:** Not ensuring a child attends school or engages in learning opportunities.
5. **Affluent neglect:** When children's emotional and relational needs are unmet despite material comfort. This may occur when parents work long hours, travel frequently, or live abroad for extended periods, leaving children primarily in the care of nannies, drivers, or household staff. While children may appear "well provided for," they may feel lonely, disconnected, or lack strong parental relationships.

Why Does Neglect Happen?

Neglect is rarely intentional. It often arises from a range of challenges families face, such as:

- Poverty and financial pressures
- Parental stress or poor mental health
- Domestic conflict
- Substance misuse
- Work commitments and family separation (in the case of affluent neglect)

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It is important to remember that struggling parents may need support, not judgement. Safeguarding is about protecting children and supporting families so they can provide the safe, nurturing environment children need.

Signs that may indicate neglect

Children who are being neglected may show some of the following signs:

- Consistently poor hygiene (dirty clothes, unwashed hair, body odour)
- Frequent hunger or stealing food
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather
- Regularly being late or missing school without explanation
- Tiredness, listlessness, or falling asleep in class
- Untreated medical needs (e.g., dental pain, persistent illness)
- Low self-esteem, withdrawn behaviour, or difficulty forming friendships
- In cases of affluent neglect: loneliness, reluctance to go home, over-reliance on nannies/drivers, or seeking extra attention from teachers and peers

The Impact of Neglect

Neglect is sometimes called “*the hidden harm*” because its effects may not be immediately visible. However, research shows it can have long-lasting consequences on a child’s:

- **Physical health** – poor growth, frequent illness, malnutrition.
- **Cognitive development** – delays in learning, language, and problem-solving.
- **Emotional wellbeing** – anxiety, depression, difficulty regulating emotions.
- **Social development** – struggles with trust, attachment, and relationships later in life.

The earlier neglect is identified, the greater the chance of minimising these impacts.

What Parents Can Do

Even in loving families, the busyness of daily life can mean children’s emotional or practical needs get overlooked. Here are some simple reminders:

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- Make regular quality time with your child — even small daily moments count more than expensive gifts.
- Notice changes in behaviour — children often communicate distress through actions more than words.
- Keep an eye on basic routines: regular meals, sleep, and school attendance.
- If life feels overwhelming, reach out for support. Speaking to a trusted friend, school staff, or local services is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Safeguarding Together

Safeguarding is a community responsibility. If you are worried that a child may be experiencing neglect, including affluent neglect, trust your instincts and speak up. It could be to a teacher, a member of the safeguarding team, or local child protection services. Remember: it is always better to raise a concern and be wrong, than to stay silent and risk a child remaining in harm.

Final Thought

Neglect is often hidden in plain sight — and sometimes hidden behind material comfort. By learning to recognise all five types of neglect and responding with compassion and responsibility, we can ensure that every child feels cared for, supported, and safe.

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YouTube Kids

[YouTube Kids](#) automatically filters out most inappropriate content for children aged 12 and under. But no automated system is perfect, so it may not catch everything.

Videos that look like they're child-friendly could include violent or disturbing content. They might be suggested videos, or appear in search results.



5 steps to help keep your child safe

YouTube Kids takes you through parental controls when you set it up. Make sure you set yourself up as a parent and then add child accounts.

You can set it up on the website (<https://www.youtubekids.com/>) or download the app. Once you're set up, follow the steps below.

1. Set parental controls to help protect your child from seeing inappropriate content

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You can set content settings so your child only sees videos intended for certain ages (4 and under, 5 to 7, and 8 to 12), or so they only see videos you approve. You choose this during the set-up process, or can change this after set-up

You can also turn off search so your child can only see recommended videos under each category in the home screen, and can't search for videos

To do either of these things, go to the following page and select the relevant tab for your device, then scroll down to 'Change your child's content level settings' or 'Turn off search':

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6172308>

2. Block videos or channels that you don't want your child to watch

You can block specific channels and videos from both your linked parent account and the YouTube Kids app.

You can find instructions here:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/7178746>

3. Report inappropriate content

YouTube Kids filters and safeguards against inappropriate content, but can't guarantee complete safety. Make sure your child knows how to report content that makes them uncomfortable or that upsets them.

You can find instructions here:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6130562>

4. Set a timer to limit time on the app

You can set a screen time limit on YouTube Kids to encourage healthy habits.

See this page to find out how: <https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6130558>

5. Turn off autoplay

Autoplay allows related content to play after the current video has finished.

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To find out how to block it, go to the following page and select the relevant tab for your device, then scroll down to 'Turn off autoplay':

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6172308>

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Fortnite **is free to download** on PC/Mac, Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch and Android devices.

What are the concerns?

You may have seen news reports or heard concerns raised about:

- **Communication between players:** they can talk to each other via messaging or a headset and microphone. Children could speak to strangers or be at risk of cyber-bullying
- **In-app purchases:** children can build up large bills on their parents' accounts by buying items like outfits and weapons for their character (known as 'skins')
- **Player-made experiences:** these are activities and games made by other users, called 'islands'. Epic Games moderates these, but they aren't made by the people who make Fortnite itself
- **Inappropriate content:** Players can wear skins of characters from pop culture that might not be age-appropriate for them, such as horror movie characters. Music in Fortnite can include songs already censored for explicit content (like swear words), but that may still be inappropriate for your child
- **The game's addictive nature:** some children might have a hard time putting the game down, especially if they're on a winning streak or having fun with their friends.

3 steps to take to keep your child safe

1. Use the parental controls on your gaming device

Most devices allow you to **set time limits** on game play, **set age limits** for content, and **restrict in-app purchases**. Go to the website below for links to instructions on your child's device – it covers Fortnite, as well as devices like Nintendo Switch, PlayStation and Xbox:

[Ask About Games](https://www.askaboutgames.com/get-started/setup-parental-controls/) –

<https://www.askaboutgames.com/get-started/setup-parental-controls/>

Fortnite has its own [Parental Controls](#), allowing you to set age limits for content, screen time limits and prevent unauthorised spending

2. Adjust your child's voice and text chat options

Speak to your child to make sure they understand how to use this feature safely. Use [Parental Controls](#) to limit who your child can talk or chat to. You can also

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[follow these instructions](#) to change text and voice settings in the game or block or mute individual players.

Encourage them to report any offensive or inappropriate chat or texts in the game. See the Fortnite FAQs on [voice and text reporting here](#)

3. Make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour

To **report** players or player-made experiences that make your child feel uncomfortable, follow the steps on [Epic Games' website](#).

What else can I do?

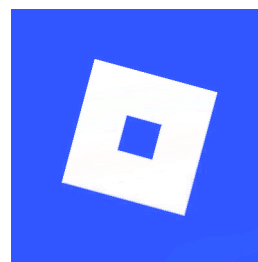
Download and play the game to help you understand it.

Talk to your child about what they're doing online, and make sure they know they can talk to you about anything that has upset them. See more guidance from the NSPCC about [talking to your child about online safety](#).

Check your bank statements and gaming system account balance regularly for in-app purchases you're not happy with, and to make sure your child isn't getting around any passwords you've set up.

Roblox

Roblox is an online game-creating platform where you can create and publish games (Roblox calls these 'experiences'), and play other users' games.



What potential risks are there?

Roblox can be a fun way for children to be creative and work together, but there are some potential risks you should be aware of.

- **Inappropriate content:** Roblox's user-generated content isn't rigorously age-rated like other platforms
- **Contact:** strangers might try to talk to your child. This could be harmless, but some adults use platforms like Roblox to make contact with children to build relationships with them and later cause them harm
- **Bullying and griefing:** 'griefing' is where someone intentionally ruins the game for others

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- **In-game purchases:** the game is free to play, but users can buy upgrades using the game's currency known as 'Robux'

8 steps to keep your child safe

1. Create your own Roblox account and link it to your child's account

Follow the steps on [Roblox's site](#) to create your own account, then link it to your child's account. Then, you'll be able to use parental controls.

2. Filter content by using Roblox's content maturity restrictions

Follow the steps under 'Content Controls' on [Roblox's site](#) to restrict the types of content your child sees.

3. Set controls on interactions

Follow the steps under 'Communication Controls' on [Roblox's site](#) to control who your child can talk to.

4. Tell your child to be careful about talking to people they don't know

Anyone can pretend to be a child online, so they should be careful about what they share and who they accept 'Friend Requests' from.

5. Set monthly spend restrictions to limit spending

Follow the steps on [Roblox's site](#) to limit how much your child spends on Roblox.

If your child plays Roblox on Xbox, you'll need to follow the steps on [Microsoft's site](#) instead (you'll need to set up a [Family Safety account](#) first).

6. Make sure your child knows how to report and block users

Roblox explains how to do this in its articles on [reporting rule violations](#) and [blocking other users](#).

7. Talk regularly with your child about what they're doing online

Make it more of an ongoing conversation – that way, they're more likely to tell you if something goes wrong or upsets them.

See tips from the NSPCC on talking to your child about online safety:

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

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8. Tell us about any bullying your child experiences

If it involves other children at ICS, we can follow our anti-bullying procedures. And even if it doesn't, knowing about it will help us to look out for your child.

Roblox will automatically stop children under 13 sharing personal information, but it would be possible to make contact on Roblox and then move the conversation to another platform.