

17 January 2018

Dear Colleague

Current Snapchat Safeguarding Risk

I have been informed by the police that there is a current safeguarding concern regarding Snapchat that is directly involving and impacting on children and young people in Croydon. So far 11 of our schools have been affected either directly or indirectly, both in the maintained and independent sectors. Where pupils have been identified they have been spoken to by the police and their parents and schools have been informed. However, it is likely that this is a wider issue.

The reports surround:

1. Pupils being enticed to send images of themselves to others, by others who are known to them, and then these are being circulated more widely (whether for revenge or otherwise).
2. Images being taken without knowledge and circulated (less common than 1).

Young people have reported students seeing indecent images of either themselves or people known to them being circulated within a Snapchat forum.

Three Snapchat forums have been highlighted:

- baitout
- baitoutpage2
- baitoutbackup2

The images that have been shared fall within the follow four offences:

1. Making indecent images of children
2. Possession with intent to distribute indecent images of children
3. Distribution of indecent images of children
4. Distribution of a private sexual image without consent to cause offence (not limited to images of young persons, colloquial known as 'revenge porn')

The owners/operators of these forums is unknown at the moment and police are working with Snapchat to try and identify the perpetrators.

Within the last four days four separate crime reports have been filed involving children from four separate schools and the NSPCC have reported a further seven schools so far knowingly affected.

Please alert the children in your school to the dangers of sharing images to reinforce your normal safeguarding messages around appropriate use of social media and highlight to them and that the messages they share may not be going to the people they think they are sending them to. Please also remind them that by sharing such images they may be committing an offence.

If you become aware of any young people in your school who have been affected by this I would be grateful if you could share this information in order to safeguard children and to support the police investigation in identifying the owners of these forums.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Butler', with a stylized flourish underneath.

David Butler
Director of Education and Youth Engagement