

'Staying Safe' survey – findings for children's internet safety

Aims

This research was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to (i) measure and track parents' and children's awareness, attitudes and reported behaviour across the various safety issues covered within the Staying Safe Action Plan and the Byron Review; (ii) inform further campaign development and priorities; and (iii) provide quantitative data for the DfE to measure levels of internet safety awareness.

Key Findings

- When prompted with a list of specific types of internet safety concerns, 44 % of parents/carers of children aged 5-11 and 47 % of parents/carers of children aged 12-17 are concerned about their child being in contact with inappropriate people; 52 % of parents of children aged 5-11 and 42 % of parents of children aged 12-17 are concerned about inappropriate content.
- In a combination of prompted and unprompted responses, 40 % of parents of children aged 5-11 and 46 % of parents of children aged 12-17 believe that their children are at risk of being exposed to unsuitable internet content.
- In a combination of prompted and unprompted responses, 34 % of parents of children aged 5-11 and 46 % of parents of children aged 12-17 believe that their children are at risk from inappropriate contact with other people online.
- When prompted, 30 % of children aged 12-17 state they are concerned about inappropriate individuals making contact with them; 9 % state they are concerned about being exposed to inappropriate content; and 8 % state they are concerned about cyber bullying.
- 18 % of children aged 12-17 state that they have encountered harmful content online.
- 19 % of children aged 12-17 state that they have experienced cyber bullying.
- There is a disparity between what parents and their children aged 12-17 say about internet safety practices.
 - 77 % of parents of children aged 5-11 and 81 % of parents of children aged 12-17 report that they know what their child does online; however, 33 % of children aged 12-17 claim that their parents *do not* know what they do online.
 - 67 % of parents/carers of children aged 12-17 state that they have rules governing their children's internet use; however, only 50 % of children in this aged group state that their parents have rules governing their use of the internet.

- 79 % of parents/carers of children aged 12-17 state that they have spoken to their children about safe internet usage, though only 52 % of children in this age group state that they have spoken about safe internet use with their parents.
- 91 % of children aged 12-17 state that they know how to protect themselves on the internet, and 87 % of children aged 12-17 are confident that they would know what to do if they saw/did something inappropriate online.
- However, only 35 % of children aged 12-17 would talk to their parents if they encountered something harmful online; 8 % would seek advice; 6 % would report it to the police; 7 % would report it to the website; and 12 % would do nothing.

Policy Context

The 'Staying Safe' survey was designed to measure levels of parental concern for child internet safety and knowledge/awareness of risk-taking behaviour among children and young people. This data is essential for the development of evidence-based policies for the promotion of resonant internet safety messages among parents and children.

Methodology

The large scale, quantitative survey was administered to 1433 parents/carers of children aged 0-17, and 833 children and young people aged 12-17. Interviews were conducted in June and July 2009 with respondents throughout the UK.

Background

Safety is one of the five key outcomes of the government's 'Every Child Matters' strategy. The 'Staying Safe' survey was commissioned by the Department for Education in order to establish some benchmark levels of awareness among parents and children and young people of internet safety issues.

Sources <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR192.pdf>; last accessed 10/12/2010

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