

SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT APRIL 2026

As we move into April and the Easter period, it is important to recognise how changes in routine, increased free time, and reduced structure can heighten safeguarding risks, particularly within online spaces.

This month, we focus on key safeguarding themes relevant to both learners and colleagues, including respectful workplace behaviour, online influence and misinformation, digital risks linked to AI, harmful online communities, and the impact of social isolation.

Periods such as Easter can increase screen time and exposure to online content, making awareness and critical thinking more important than ever.

As always, our aim is to support you in remaining informed, professionally curious, and confident in recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns.

IN THIS EDITION, WE WILL EXPLORE

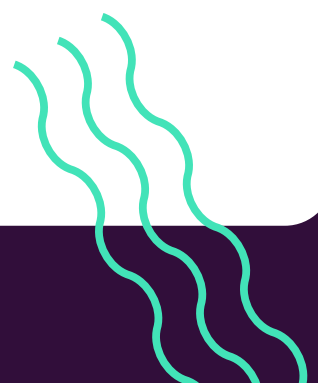
**WORKPLACE BULLYING &
RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR**

**PREVENT: ONLINE
INFLUENCE, PROPAGANDA
& MISINFORMATION**

**AI RISKS & DIGITAL
SAFEGUARDING**

**HARMFUL ONLINE
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**SOCIAL ISOLATION &
UNHEALTHY ONLINE
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WORKPLACE BULLYING & RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

Workplace behaviour can become a safeguarding concern when individuals are repeatedly undermined, excluded, ignored, or made to feel unsafe.

Bullying is not always loud or obvious. In many cases, it develops gradually through repeated dismissive behaviour, unreasonable criticism, exclusion, or misuse of authority.

Environments that lack psychological safety can affect confidence, wellbeing, and willingness to contribute. Safeguarding therefore includes recognising patterns of harm - not just isolated incidents.

EXAMPLES

Repeated exclusion from conversations

Dismissive or belittling comments

Excessive criticism

Undermining confidence in front of others

Passive-aggressive communication

Misuse of seniority or authority



DID YOU KNOW?

- Bullying can be psychological as well as verbal
- It often develops gradually over time
- Individuals may not report concerns due to fear of escalation or uncertainty

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PREVENT: ONLINE INFLUENCE, PROPAGANDA & MISINFORMATION

Ongoing global tensions can lead to a rise in misinformation, propaganda, and highly polarised narratives online. These issues are particularly evident in the context of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, where the situation is complex, deeply emotive, and continues to impact individuals and communities globally.

It is important to acknowledge that for many, this conflict is not just a news story but something that may connect to personal identity, cultural background, or lived experience. This can make online content feel especially powerful, urgent, and, at times, overwhelming.

WHY THIS MATTERS DURING THE EASTER BREAK

Increased free time and screen use during holiday periods can increase exposure to unverified or misleading content.

BEFORE ENGAGING WITH ONLINE CONTENT, ASK:

- Who created this?
- What is the purpose?
- Is it verified?
- Is this fact, opinion, or manipulation?

Scenario

You see an article shared online claiming:

"This is the truth the media won't show you about the current conflict."

What should you do?

- Pause before reacting
- Check credible sources
- Avoid sharing unverified content



For further information on recognising and responding to online influence, misinformation, and harmful narratives, visit: <https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

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AI RISKS & DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

Artificial Intelligence is becoming more embedded in everyday life, but it also introduces new safeguarding risks.

Content can now be generated or manipulated to appear highly realistic. This includes deepfake videos, AI-generated text, impersonation, and false identities.

These developments make it increasingly difficult to distinguish between genuine and manipulated content, particularly within fast-moving digital environments.



HOLIDAY RISK REMINDER

With more time online during Easter, exposure to manipulated content, unsafe platforms, and misleading digital interactions may increase.



SAFE VS RISK

More likely to be safe:

- verified educational platforms
- official government websites
- regulated learning platforms

Potential risks:

- content with no credible source
- anonymous AI-generated advice
- accounts using altered or synthetic media

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HARMFUL ONLINE COMMUNITIES & SOCIAL ISOLATION

Some online communities promote harmful attitudes, reinforce division, or normalise toxic or extreme viewpoints. This can include spaces linked to misogyny, entitlement, or "us vs them" narratives, including manosphere-related content.

The influence of these spaces is often gradual. Individuals may become drawn in through repeated messaging, emotional content, or communities that discourage challenge.

At the same time, increased time online can contribute to social isolation and unhealthy digital relationships, including parasocial connections - one-sided emotional attachments to online personalities.

WARNING SIGNS

- echo chambers or one-sided viewpoints
- increasingly extreme messaging
- emotional manipulation using anger or fear
- withdrawal from real-world relationships
- strong dependency on online communities or personalities

PROTECTIVE ACTIONS

- maintain balance between online and offline interaction
- encourage real-world connection
- set digital boundaries
- stay open to different perspectives
- speak to someone if online content begins to affect wellbeing





RAISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

As your training provider, Instep has a duty of care to its learners, we need to ensure that you are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation. If you would like to raise a safeguarding concern, please either phone 07849 643815 or email safeguarding@instepuk.com you can also scan the QR code above to raise a concern.

Meet Instep's safeguarding team:



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