

Cotham School

Online Safety Newsletter

Academic Year:
2025/2026

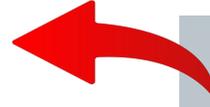
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Newsletter Topic:

AI, Algorithms & Misogyny Online

Link to the Podcast:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002d8wf>



Today's newsletter was inspired by the Radical with Amol Rajan podcast, featuring feminist campaigner Laura Bates. Social media isn't just entertainment — it's shaping how young people see the world. Bates highlights how platforms and algorithms are fuelling misogyny, pushing harmful content to teenage boys even if they don't actively search for it. Figures like Andrew Tate have become popular online, with their videos often promoted by recommendation systems. This raises urgent questions about the responsibility of tech companies, the risks of radicalisation, and how parents can help their children navigate digital spaces safely.

This raises urgent questions:

- What responsibility do tech companies have?
- How can parents and schools protect young people?
- What impact does this have on society if boys are radicalised by online hate?

Key Risks for Young People

Young people face many risks in today's online world.

- Platforms recommend extreme content, which normalises harmful views among young people, highlighting algorithmic amplification at work.
- Controversial figures gain traction online and shape attitudes toward women, showing how influencer culture drives harmful narratives.
- Exposure to misogyny online can escalate into offline behaviour, revealing dangerous radicalisation pathways.
- Constant exposure to hate affects empathy, relationships, and wellbeing, underscoring the serious mental health impact.

Guidance for Parents

- Talk often with your children. Ask your child what they're watching online. Show curiosity, not judgment. Encourage them to question why certain videos are recommended.
- Use parental controls and discuss healthy screen time limits.
- Recommend positive role models. Share diverse voices and content that promote respect and equality.
- Stay Informed. Keep up to date with online trends — knowing who influencers are helps you understand what your child may encounter.

Practical Steps

Here are practical steps you can take with your child to build safer online habits:

- Check the algorithm on your device or with your child. Explore how "recommended videos" work and why they appear.
- Remind your children how to report harmful content and block accounts.
- Encourage your children to work with staff in school to reinforce digital literacy and respectful behaviour. Digital literacy tasks are set on Google Classroom every week.
- Share concerns with other parents or staff at our school — collective awareness and a community response is powerful.

Conversation Starters

Discussing sensitive issues can be challenging, so we've included conversation starters to make it easier 😊

1. "Have you ever seen a video that made you uncomfortable? What did you do?"
2. "What kind of videos do you see most often online?"
3. "Do you think social media shows boys and girls the same kinds of content?"
4. "Why do you think certain influencers get so popular?"

Online misogyny is shaping the next generation's attitudes toward women and relationships. By staying engaged, informed, and proactive, we can help our children navigate digital spaces safely and respectfully.

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