



Online Safety for Schools

Safeguarding Guidance: Understanding and Responding to Online Misogyny

For Teachers, Carers, and Safeguarding Professionals

1. Overview

Online misogyny refers to harmful content and behaviours in digital spaces that promote hatred, abuse, discrimination, or sexual exploitation of women and girls.

It is prevalent across social media, gaming platforms, forums, and video-sharing sites, with particular concentration in the so-called 'manosphere' — a network of online communities that perpetuate misogynistic beliefs, often linked to extremist and discriminatory ideologies.

2. Understanding the Manosphere

- A loose collection of blogs, forums, social media channels, and influencer accounts promoting rigid, stereotypical gender roles.
- Masculinity defined by dominance, wealth, and sexual conquest.
- Women depicted as irrational, manipulative, promiscuous, and materialistic.
- Misinformation and conspiracy theories used to justify prejudice.
- Primarily developed in North America but now global.
- Some factions linked to alt-right, white nationalist movements, racism, and anti-LGBT+ hate.

3. Adolescent Boys' Engagement

- UK boys more likely to use Reddit, YouTube, and gaming platforms where misogynistic content is common and moderation is weak.
- Many falsify their age to access adult-rated content.
- Misogynistic material is widespread on mainstream platforms like TikTok.
- Content often appears disguised as humour or self-improvement advice.
- Algorithms can escalate exposure from mild stereotyping to extreme ideology.
- Figures such as Andrew Tate have vast youth audiences despite being banned from several platforms.
- Content monetisation encourages further sensationalism.

4. Offline Impact in Education and Care Settings

- Increased use of degrading language towards women and girls.
- References to misogynistic influencers in classroom discussions.
- Disrespectful or harassing conduct towards female peers and staff.
- Negative impact on female pupils' participation, confidence, and mental health.



- Engagement with extreme manosphere communities has been connected to interpersonal abuse and, in some cases, mass violence by young men.

5. Links with Mental Health

- Loneliness, social rejection, depression, anxiety, autism, and low self-esteem can make adolescents more susceptible.
- Searches for mental health or relationship advice may lead to misogynistic spaces.
- Communities often stigmatise mental health support.
- UK data: 66% of boys aged 11–14 report feeling worried, sad, or scared after viewing misogynistic content.
- Associated stress and depression reported among female pupils and staff.

6. Safeguarding Actions for Schools and Care Settings

Education and Prevention

- Integrate digital literacy and critical thinking into PSHE/RSE curricula.
- Provide explicit teaching on recognising harmful stereotypes and online radicalisation tactics.
- Encourage discussion of healthy relationships, respect, and empathy.

Staff Training and Awareness

- Train staff to recognise signs of misogynistic influence.
- Develop clear protocols for responding to incidents.

Parental Engagement

- Offer resources to help parents identify harmful online content.
- Provide guidance on parental controls and online safety settings.

Pupil Support

- Create safe spaces for discussion.
- Signpost to reputable mental health services and helplines.

7. Policy and Wider Context

- Advocate for legislation that makes platforms 'safe by design'.
- Ensure young people's voices are included in online safety policies.
- Support ongoing research into the impact of online misogyny.

8. Key Support Resources

- Childline – 0800 1111 | www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000 | www.nspcc.org.uk
- The Mix – Support for under 25s | www.themix.org.uk
- Hope Not Hate – www.hopenothate.org.uk



QR CODE FOR DETAILS CURRENT ONLINE SAFETY WORKSHOPS



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