

Dear Dame Melanie,

I send the attached letter OBO Islington headteacher Network of 55 nursery, primary, secondary and special schools and an urgent plea for effective age limits for Social Media companies.

Children are accessing unsafe, explicit, and illegal material, at scale and the addictive nature of the products makes it harder to teach and impossible to safeguard.

We are increasingly requiring police involvement in our schools, often for children under the age of 13+ who should not even be on the services that are harming them.

A current case under investigation in a primary school, has seen the police seize 23 phones from pupils Y3-6 (age 7-11) and high category self-generated images shared on snapchat, as well as far-right and racist material on What's App groups with 1000+ people. Only 3 of the 23 families owned/knew the pin code for their child's smart phone.

(Parents are trusting of big tech and demanding the phones back, a parent of one child said her son had "nothing" to do at the weekend without his phone)

'Self-generated' child sexual abuse material (CSAM) has been the subject of research that PIER (Policing Institute for the Eastern Region) have just finished on behalf of the Internet Watch Foundation. **Many (children) described receiving unwanted sexual images and some commented that it has become normalised and part of their lives.**

As professionals, we sense that in growing number of cases there is no "Coercive human" online involved, rather illegal content being pushed & normalised to children via the "coercive algorithm" on highly addictive apps, which nudge children to share photos, videos and location.

I include on copy, national and global organisations our network has actively collaborated with around policy and education updates over the past 20 years.
Our headteacher network looks forward to hearing from you.