

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

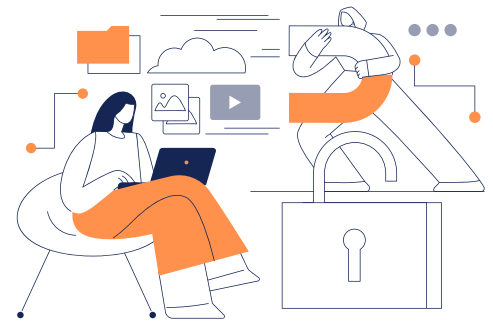
FEBRUARY 2024



DOXING - ONLINE SAFETY

For many of us when we go online, our privacy is something that we prioritise. Although we may like to share our holiday pictures and birthday celebrations on social media, there are some things which are just off limits. Specific details such as our home address, or our contact number may be publicly available somewhere, but that doesn't mean we necessarily want everybody to know about it. Because of this, the act or threat of our personal details being shared online can carry considerable harm and upset to targeted individuals.

This is where the term 'Doxing' came about.



What is Doxing?

It is a practice where individuals or groups expose and publicise private information about a person on the internet without their consent, often for the purposes of causing distress or creating malicious intent.

Personal information can include:

- home addresses
- phone numbers
- job location
- email addresses
- information about family members



Those who commit this act often exploit publicly available information across online platforms such as social media or betray the trust of someone they know; releasing information that was already known prior.

Why Do People Dox?



It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why doxing takes place, but it can be motivated by a number of different factors. Perpetrators may want to target an individual because of a disagreement or a conflict that may have previously occurred. There could be a desire to intimidate or harass someone which can lead to blackmail or other forms of extortion.

In some cases, doxing is associated with online vigilantism, where individuals take matters into their own hands to expose individuals for a perceived crime or a social injustice. If there is malicious intent, a perpetrator may encourage other online users to harass or abuse the individual with the information provided. In some situations, this can lead to real world harm such as stalking, violence and in severe cases, a danger to life. Exposure of personal information can also lead to long-term emotional distress for the victim as well as potential reputational damage. If doxing occurs due to an 'accusation of abuse' then this would usually be classed as a criminal matter and the police would need to be involved.



Is Doxing illegal?

While doxing is not illegal in the UK, it can lead to consequences for the perpetrator if there is malicious intent that leads to harassment of an individual.

Protecting against Doxing

As a lot of personal information is readily available online, it's important to take steps to protect yourself from information falling into the wrong hands.

This includes:

- regularly reviewing privacy and visibility settings on social media platforms
- critically thinking about the amount of personal information we choose to share publicly.
- You may also consider using online tools such as Reputation Alerts if you feel information has been shared but you're not sure where or by who.

What if my information has been shared?

If you are concerned that someone has shared your information online without consent, you can report the individual to the online platform and flag it as a privacy violation.

KEY REMINDERS

- Lanyards must be worn at all times.
- Please ensure you sign in and out of school at all times.
- Do not let visitors follow you into reception behind you as you walk in
- You must lock your computer screen when you walk away from your device

