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Online Safety Guidance   **May 2022**

Good afternoon,

We are incredibly proud as a school of how well the pupils managed during the lockdowns with online learning. We also need to acknowledge that as a result children have upskilled themselves in the use of devices which is positive. However, while the internet is a wonderful tool for a multitude of reasons it does also pose risks. Children without the necessary restrictions can access inappropriate and explicit content which can be damaging to their mental health.

It is only natural that as children mature, they develop curiosities for more 'grown up' issues and content. The internet offers many sources of information, chatrooms, and videos to explore. Additionally with social media playing a big part in society and smartphones allowing instant access to these platforms, it is hard for parents to monitor and even restrict the content of what our young people are seeing intentionally or by accident.

The purpose of this document is to give you some information on how you can create a safe usage of these devices and protect your children from accessing inappropriate and harmful information.

Safe use of Devices

We would strongly recommend that all devices used by children which give them access to the internet have parental controls set up. This would prevent children from accessing explicit content online. Most internet providers such as BT have guides on how to set these restrictions up. You can contact your provider or visit their webpages to find out how to do this.

Restrictions also need to be set on individual devices the links below can guide you through the process:

Online safety advice for 6-10 year olds | Internet Matters

Pre-teens (11-13) online safety advice | Internet Matters

You can also put parental controls on Tik Tok and You tube to only allow your child to view age appropriate content. Here are the links that allow you to do this.

Tik Tok Parental Controls | Digital Parenting (vodafone.co.uk)

How to Set Up YouTube Parental Controls - Family Is First (confidefamily.com)

Monitoring Usage

While we understand the importance of children learning about being responsible and having their own privacy, we as adults, need to teach children how to be safe, sensible and responsible with their devices. Establishing a clear set of rules and installing a healthy screen time are essential in protecting our children's health and wellbeing but also teaching responsibility.

The guidelines for a healthy and safe usage are to remove devices from bedrooms after a certain hour providing them with a clear break from screen time and allowing them to get the rest they require.

We also suggest that you do monitor the content of their phones to ensure their safety and that they are not victims of grooming or cyberbullying. Having regular conversations with your child about how to be safe online is essential. This includes not giving out their personal details to strangers or opening links from unknown senders. Also, reporting anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.   This is a good way of supporting your child to transition from childhood to adulthood and teaching them responsibility, trust and safety.

It is very hard to know what your child is doing on their phones or devices without careful monitoring. Some parents choose to check their children's phone content regularly e.g., messages, google history, social media accounts and have check-ins/ conversations about it. Some parents use apps that can monitor the phone activity scanning for cyberbullying, inappropriate content of messages/photos and search histories in the background. There are a few apps that do this like SaferKid Text Monitor and SmartDaddy. The UK leading app is mSpy visit www.mspy.com for more information on the services it provides.

The NSPCC websites content is brilliant for parents it has a wealth of topics to explore with very useful information.

Keeping children safe online | NSPCC

The NSPCC provides information and short videos about the following topics:
- Online safety advice
- Inappropriate and sexual behaviours
- Worried about something online?
- Online safety guides
- Online safety resources for children
- We must end online abuse

The following link can provide you with guidance on how to support your child if they have searched for content that was inappropriate for their age or if they have come across explicit and damaging content accidentally.

Scotland-Whats-the-Problem.pdf (stopitnow.org.uk)

We hope that you have found this information helpful and that we can work together to protect our pupils online. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any of these topics further.

Kind regards,
SMT
Kinellar School