Safeguarding newsletter 2023

Autumn

Welcome to our termly newsletter that will keep you up to date with essential information regarding safeguarding. We will be focusing on Online Safety. Please remember that if you ever have a safeguarding concern regarding your child, or indeed another child, you can always speak to any member of staff or a member of our school's safeguarding team, details of which are available from the school office or via our school website.

Does your child know what personal information is?

Does your child understand the importance of keeping information private? Are they aware that by uploading a video or photo online, they may actually be sharing private information without realising? For example, have they (or even you) ever uploaded a photo or video with the following in it: Wearing their school uniform or wearing a local club shirt? Showing their local area in the background, perhaps inadvertently including street names, shop names or house numbers? Celebrating their birthday?

Talk to your children, do they realise the potential consequences of posting their personal information? Do they truly know all of their online 'friends'? By sharing photos described above, a follower might be able to work out what school or clubs they attend, where they live and their date of birth.

Do you want people knowing this information about your child?

What are your children saying online?

Most games now include some form of chat facility; this can be via a headset or via a messaging feature within the game. It is very easy within these chats to behave in a way that children wouldn't if they were face to face with each other e.g. it is easier to call another child a nasty name via a screen than to say it to their face.

These types of incidents can quickly escalate as online environments are often unsupervised so whereas an incident of name calling on the playground is quickly brought to the attention of a member of staff this doesn't happen in an online environment. Talk to your children about how they are speaking to their friends online. Sit with them while they are playing the game to see how your child chats with others, is it always appropriate? Explain to them what to do if they are called a nasty name, how should they respond and what they can do if a situation escalates.

Christmas is coming 🎅

Christmas is almost upon us once again, and soon some lucky children will be excitedly tearing the wrapping off a new mobile phone, tablet or games console. For some of them, it will be the first time they've owned a device that connects them to the online world. Even for older children, a new device means new corners of the digital landscape to explore – and unfortunately, new risks to be aware of.

These top tips will help you guide your young ones in enjoying their new digital gifts safely and responsibly throughout the year to come.

In the guide, you'll find tips such as how to turn location settings off, how to discourage device dependency and how to set up parental controls.

The 12 Online Safety Tips of Christmas

FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

Christmas is almost upon us once again, and soon some lucky children will be excitedly tearing the wrapping off a new mobile phone, tablet or games console. For some of them, it will be the first time they've owned a device that connects them to the online world. Even for older children, a new device means new corners of the digital landscape to explore – and, unfortunately, new risks to be aware of.

We've put together our top tips so that you can guide your young ones in enjoying their new digital gifts safely and responsibly throughout the year to come.
Merry Christmas!

1. ALWAYS SET A PASSWORD
If your child's new device has a password protection feature, use it! It'll help to keep their private information safe and will deny others access to their device without permission. Your children's passwords should be something memorable to them – but something which other people can't guess (it's also a good idea for parents to write it down in case it gets forgotten!).

2. SET UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS'
This really is an essential when your child gets a new device, so they're protected from the outset. Most phones, tablets and consoles allow you to customise their settings to determine which games your child can play, how they can communicate (and who with), what content they can access and so on. It will give you peace of mind that they can't inadvertently do something they shouldn't.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO AGE RATINGS
One of the first things children want to do with any new device is play games and explore apps. Before they download anything or install a new console game, check its age rating. Many popular games and apps have content that's not suitable for younger ages. The safest long-term solution is to adjust the device's settings so they can only download and use games and apps appropriate for their age.

4. KEEP NUMBERS AND DEVICES PRIVATE
Make sure your child understands that they should never share their phone number with someone they don't know or accept a friend request from them. They should also appreciate that it's a good idea to mainly keep their device out of sight, never lend it to a stranger, and never put it down somewhere that other people could steal it or take it to use without asking.

5. HAVE 'THE MONEY CONVERSATION'
Before your children start using their new device in earnest, talk to them about in-app purchases and other ways that money might be spent through their device. Once they understand, you might want to agree on a spending limit and reassure them that they can come to you if they're uncertain, or if they have made a purchase by accident.

6. DISCOURAGE DEVICE DEPENDENCY
Of course, children who've just got a new device will naturally want to spend as much time on it as possible. But whether they're zapping bad guys, watching videos or connecting with friends, it's easy for them to get attached very quickly. Gently remind them that having family time, going outdoors and getting some exercise are still fun, too. And the device will be there when they get back.

7. EXPLAIN SECURE WIFI NETWORKS
Your home WiFi is protected by a password that only your family knows, whereas public networks (like those found in coffee shops, for example) can be accessed by anyone. It's important that your child grasps this difference because, if they're using a portable device on an unsecured network, then a hacker could access their personal information without them even knowing.

8. LIMIT SCREEN TIME
Using a device for too long, especially just before bed, can interfere with a child's sleep quality and reduce their concentration and overall enthusiasm. It might be helpful to agree on certain times of day when they don't use their device. Most devices' settings let you specify a screen-time limit, helping your child to stay fresh and focused in order to perform well at school.

9. ONLY PAIR WITH KNOWN BLUETOOTH DEVICES
Your child may want to connect to another device via Bluetooth, so they can listen to music wirelessly or share pictures and videos with nearby friends. But if they use Bluetooth to link with a device that they don't know, they're at risk of a stranger being able to see their personal information or having someone transmit a virus onto their device.

10. TURN LOCATION SETTINGS OFF
It's safest to disable the device's location services (if it's a portable device) so your child doesn't inadvertently make other people aware of where they are. You can usually do this via the device's privacy control settings. Turning location settings off not only means your child's whereabouts can't be tracked by others, it also significantly extends battery life.

11. STAY AWARE OF THE SURROUNDINGS
It's quite common to see adults not looking where they're going while engrossed in their phone. Children are even more easily distracted. In some cases, children have been hit by cars or cyclists because they were staring at their device and lost track of where they were. Remind your child that screens and walking don't mix. If they need to use their device, they should stop in a safe place first.

12. BE THERE IF THEY NEED TO TALK
Even when you've made a device as secure as you can, there's still a possibility of your child seeing something that bothers them, or someone they don't know attempting to contact them. If this happens, listen to their concerns, empathise and reassure them. Once they've explained what happened, you can decide if you should take further action like blocking or reporting another user.

National Online Safety
NOS
#WakeUpWednesday

How much screen time is your child having?

In the technological world we live in, it is really important that we are aware of and monitor our children's use of technology so that they are not spending too much time online and attached to devices.

What is screen time?
Screen time is the time you spend watching TV or DVDs, using computers, playing video or hand-held computer games, or using tablets or smartphones.

Screen time can be:
- interactive – for example, playing video games, communicating via Skype, or using online tools to draw pictures
- not interactive – for example, sitting still and watching movies, TV programs or YouTube videos
- educational – for example, doing homework online
- recreational – for example, playing games or watching videos for fun.

Screen time guidelines
Child development experts recommend limiting children's daily screen time. This is because real-life interactions with you and others are much better for your child's wellbeing, learning and personal development.

What do screen time limits mean for your child?
Screen time limits are about making sure your child enjoys lots of healthy, fun activities – both with and without screens.

Limits mean looking at the time your child spends on screens and making sure it doesn't get in the way of sleep and activities that are good for their development. These activities include things like physical play, reading, creative play like drawing, and social time with family and friends.

We recommend that children are not playing video games close to their bedtime as their bodies are still stimulated by the game and cause difficulties getting to sleep. Consider calming activities such as reading before bedtime.

Further Information

For further safeguarding information, you can view our website or visit:

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.childnet.com

www.childline.org.uk

www.o2.co.uk/help/online-safety

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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DSL