Online Safety News

Digital wellbeing

Young people are growing up in a technological age that brings exciting online opportunities and experiences but it can also bring challenges. It is important that children understand how to use technology in a safe way and appreciate that it can have both a positive and negative impact on their wellbeing. Childnet has produced guidance on how you as a parent/carer can support your child with their digital wellbeing.

Take a look at the Childnet guidance here:
bit.ly/ChildnetDigitalWellbeing

Online challenges and peer pressure

There are frequently online challenges that circulate on social media sites and many raise money or promote good causes such as the 'Ice Bucket Challenge'. However, some of the challenges are more sinister and can entice users into daring, frightening and sometimes harmful activities. Children can be drawn into a challenge through peer pressure, thinking all their friends are completing the challenge so they themselves also need to do so. It can be hard to tell at times if such challenges are real or rumoured but it is important to have a conversation with your child about the importance of saying 'no' to pressure, even from friends, to complete inappropriate and risky challenges and the consequences of taking part in challenges, whether offline or online. Children need to report online content that is dangerous and encourages harm. Visit the 'Parent Info' website for examples of viral trends and suggested conversation starters that may help you.

bit.ly/VirtualInternetTrends

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TikTok

TikTok, which used to be called Musical.ly, is a social networking app that young people can use to generate and share their own short videos and lip sync to popular audio clips. The app allows users to create and upload videos, remix existing videos using in-built editing tools, and also to view and comment on videos created by other users. On TikTok there is the ability to livestream, users can directly interact with online audiences through chat and live video. Profiles on TikTok are automatically set to public, so that any content posted can be seen by anyone within the app. To sign up for TikTok, young people must be at least 13 years of age.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance which outlines aspects of the app to be aware of and gives advice on making a report, using the privacy settings and parental controls that can be used: **SaferInternetTikTok**

Kik Messenger

The National Crime Agency and CEOP has been made aware of reports suggesting that unsolicited suggestive or sexualised images have been shared via the Kik Messenger app and as a result has produced a guide for parents, explaining what the app is and how best to keep your children safe if they use it. This can be accessed here: **bit.ly/ParentInfoKikMessenger**

The minimum age for accessing this app according to Kik is 13 but with parental permission. However, iTunes and Google Play rate this app as adult 17+.

Kik is an instant messaging app. It lets users create their own username and message others without having a mobile number to register. For younger children without a mobile phone they can access the app on their mobile device such as a tablet through Wi-Fi. It allows 1-1 chats but also has facility to access large public chat groups.

Kik Messenger has an inbuilt browser so that users can search for new apps and chat rooms.

REMINDER : Avoid negative postings about school life on social media

As a parent, if at any stage you are concerned or distressed about an aspect of your child's school you are strongly advised to make immediate contact with a member of staff to discuss your concerns. As highlighted in most schools' Acceptable Use Agreement, posting comments on social media about the school, staff and children should be avoided at all times. Negative postings about the school can impact on the reputation of the whole school community.

Parents/carers are encouraged to report any breaches they become aware of to the school so that they can take action and protect the reputation of the school, staff, pupils and parents/carers.

Posting threatening, obscene or offensive comments about the school online can potentially be considered as a criminal offence and can therefore have serious legal consequences.

Picture Books with an online safety message
by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross

Story books can be a great way of helping younger children to understand the positives of online technology but can also help them think about what can sometimes go wrong and skills we need to navigate the online world safely.

Below are three titles we highly recommend.

'Troll Stinks', is a book for younger children exploring the themes of cyberbullying, being kind online and taking/sharing pictures. The book is a modern take on the traditional 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story. Three goats send unkind mobile phone messages to the troll and we see the devastating effect this has on the troll.

'Chicken Clicking', explores online safety messages in a very funny and age appropriate way for younger children. Chicken has hours of fun online until everything goes wrong when she arranges to meet a friend she's made online and she finds they were not who they said they were!

Watch out for the latest very funny cautionary tale, **'#Goldilocks'**, to be released in February 2019. Everyone loves Goldilocks' amusing online videos, but in her quest to get more likes, more laughs and more hits, she tries something a little more daring: stealing porridge (#pipinghot), breaking chairs (#fun), and using someone else's bed (#sleep). What will Daddy Bear do when he sees that online?

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day 2019 will be celebrated on Tuesday 5th February 2019 with the slogan "Together for a better internet". The day provides a fantastic opportunity to engage with children and find out about their digital lives. To help you talk to your children about having a positive and safe time online, the UK Safer Internet Centre has created a pack for parents and carers, including conversation starters, a factsheet, family pledge card and lots more.

bit.ly/SaferInternetDayEducationPackParents

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