



Online Safety Newsletter

April 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

The use of social media and the digital world has been an amazing way to keep in touch through lockdown, keeping family and friends connected throughout hard times via calls, messages and even quizzes! The children have experienced screens becoming essential within their family's daily life, with some out of school clubs even continuing via zoom sessions. However, now we approach returning to normality the children may find it hard to leave their devices and define their 'real life' again. In school, we will be doing lots to recap and reinforce online safety and identity.

Below are some tips and reminders to support this at home.

Online Communities

From speaking to the children, particularly in upper KS2, it is clear that they feel their identity can be shaped and influenced by the things they do or see online; the terms 'gamer', 'TikToker' and 'influencer' being understood and discussed across the school. Although they are aware that 'friends' online are not always real friends, the need for 'followers' or 'likes' sometimes outweighs the risk in their mind. Therefore, we feel it vital to recap the recommended age recommendations.

Most forms of social media, such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram are rated at aged 13+, due to the risks posed from the digital communities. Please see this link for the complete list <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/>

Please encourage your child, if they have access to these platforms, to ensure that their account is private. If it is not, anyone and everyone access it.

Digital Detox

It is beneficial to introduce some screen-free time or a digital detox, possibly as a whole family, where time is dedicated to other activities such as getting outdoors, playing a game or even simply ensuring phones and devices are away for meals and in the lead up to bedtime. Luckily, things are starting to open up again so playing out with friends and hopefully soon being able to have friends in the house will encourage different forms of play and communication.

Talk about it

In the world we live in, the children are surrounded by digital technology and it has some fantastic benefits and opportunities. From a young age, children have the chance to learn, research, play and connect. Since it is often a part of everyday life for both adults and children, making the conversations around it regular and open can make a huge difference in allowing the children to use the online world in a way that's safe and positive for their mental health.

If you would like further advice or have any questions, please feel free to contact school and Miss Connolly can support you with ways to keep your child safe online. Alternatively, if your child has an online concern or query they can also be encouraged to discuss this with their teacher or Miss Connolly (Online Safety Lead).

Please visit the websites below for more information keeping your child safe online.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk>

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>