Larne Grammar School

Online Safety Newsletter

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Inside This Issue

Privacy & Identity Theft:

Make your children aware that they mustn't reveal any information that would allow a stranger access to their or your personal or financial information.

Useful Websites:

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers

https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers

https://www.internetmatters.org/schools-esafety/parent-online-support-pack-teachers/

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Your Child and Online Gaming

Like many other things children do online, gaming has undergone a massive increase in popularity since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of more time spent at home. In common with many other online activities, there are both negative and positive aspects.

- It's never too late to reinforce boundaries

- Keep up to date with technology and discuss what you know with your child.

- Constantly review the settings on parental controls in line with your child's age and maturity.

- Discuss and agree what is acceptable online behavior

- Talk frankly about how they behave towards others, particularly with regards to what they post online.

- Does your child really know everyone on their 'friends list'?

- Do they know what to do if they get messages from strangers?

Further Information

The organisation ThinkUknow have produced this article giving advice about in-game chat:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/

Your Child & Social Media

Teach your child to be very careful to befriend and communicate only with people that they know. Revealing personal details such as their birthday, address or where they go to school could give someone all the information they need to harm them.

Children's pages can be hacked into, their profiles changed either for fun or maliciously, or harmful comments can be posted by someone else in their name.

Above all, assure them that it's OK to come to you or another trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable about something they have seen or done on a social networking site.

For more information: https//www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/is-your-child-using-these-apps/

Omegle

This is a video chatting website. Users must be 18+ or 13+ with parental permission.

However, it does not appear to have a robust moderation nor is there registration or age verification or reporting facilities.

The website connects two strangers for either a text or video chat. Chats are anonymous unless a user provides information.

What you should be aware of?

- *Its site states 'predators have been known to use Omegle, so please be careful'.*

- *A recent BBC investigation revealed sexually explicit videos and live streaming.*

- *Net Aware rate the safety features as <u>very poor</u>*

For more info:
https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/what-is-omegle-what-parents-need-to-know/

Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse to NCA CEOP at https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Digital Footprint

A digital footprint is any information that is available online about you (even information shared by others), for example, photos, posts and comments you have made. Universities and potential employers will look at your digital footprint. From photos to status remarks, you should always think about what you share and always portray yourself in a positive light.

Remember:

If you wouldn't say it or show it to your Granny, it probably shouldn't go online

<u>Further Reading</u>:

10 things to know about digital footprints:

http://www.kathleenamorris.com/2018/06/12/digital-footprints/

Childline provides information on how to protect your privacy and how to delete things online:

https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/taking-care-your-digital-footprint/

Snapchat

- **Privacy settings** - Make sure that appropriate privacy settings are set up

- **Blocking & Reporting other users** - Does your child know how to block and report other users?

  https://snap.com/safety/safety-reporting/

  https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/a/remove-block-friends

- **Inappropriate content** - due to the nature of the app your child may come across content that is inappropriate.

- **Screenshots** - Users may take screenshots of a snap before they disappear. This may result in them losing control of what they have shared as it could be sent to other people.

- **Group chats** – in a group chat there may be people they are not friends with, increasing the risk of interacting with strangers.

- Remind them that they should only be sharing 'Snaps' with people they know and that if anyone private messages them or suggests talking on another messaging platform they should come and tell you.

TikTok

TikTok have introduced new tools to try and promote kindness on their platform.

https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/new-tools-to-promote-kindness

How safe is TikTok?

While much of TikTok is harmless fun, there are some concerns:

- You have to use privacy settings to limit how much information your kids are sharing.

- Reports of online predators targeting younger users

- Inappropriate language

This article outlines three features which you should know about if your child uses TikTok:

https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/three-tiktok-features-every-parent-should-know

Tips:

➢ Parents can use restricted Mode to reduce mature content

➢ Family Safety Mode means you can pair your account with your child's to control settings completely.

➢ Show your child how to report and block other users

https://support.tiktok.com/en/using-tiktok/followers-and-following/blocking-the-users

WhatsApp: A Guide for Parents

The default setting means that everyone, including outside your child's phone contacts, can add them to group chats without their approval. Talk to your child about their privacy settings and ask them to adjust to '*my contacts*' if they have them set to '*everyone*' by following the steps below:

WhatsApp > **Settings** > **Account** > **Privacy**

There is no direct way to report a user, or specific abuse, other than to block them from sending you further messages. To do this:

Settings > **Account** > **Privacy** > **Blocked contacts**

Further Information

https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/whatsapp-safety-a-how-to-guide-for-parents/

Screen Time Information:

"It remains a question of balance, as it is when screen use gets in the way or restricts other activities that a child's well-being can be negatively impacted"

https://parentinfo.org/article/screen-time-should-i-be-worried

https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/screen-time/

https://parentzone.org.uk/article/5-things-parents-should-know-about-screen-time

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/digital/5-a-day/

The Reverse selfie

This is a powerful one minute video highlighting the pressure of social media on girls self esteem

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2T-Rh838GA

Discord

Discord is a social networking app that gamers use to chat to each other. Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat about the game (rather than use the game's own chat facility.

Discord also includes video/voice calling which cannot be filtered.

Discord have created this article, which outlines four steps to creating a safer account, including how to block users:

https://discord.com/safety/360043857751-Four-steps-to-a-super-safe-account

Other information

- **With your child check their privacy settings and enable the 'Keep me safe' function to change who they can talk to and what they can see.**

- **Always remind them they can talk to you if anything upsets or worries them. Reassure them that you won't overreact -you're just looking out for them.**

SUMMARY: Steps to Keep Your Child Safer Online

1. **Parental Controls** – designed to help you manage your child's online activities.

2. **Talk about how their online actions can affect others** – remind them to consider how someone else might feel before they post or share something. If they are considering sharing a photo/video of somebody else, they should always ask permission first.

3. **Have an ongoing conversation** – continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use. Discuss with them how to block, unfollow or report.

4. **Make sure they know where to go for support** – remind your child they can always speak to you or a trusted adult if anything happens that worries them.