

20<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Internet Safety**

Over the past few years we have benefitted from incredible advances in technology and have been reliant on the internet to socialise, to stay in touch with loved ones and even to deliver education during lockdowns. Our curriculum is designed to help students stay safe online and we cover key topics through IT lessons, PSHE lessons and through bespoke tutorials, assemblies and workshops. In the majority of cases the internet is used appropriately and students have a positive relationship with it.

Unfortunately, we are seeing an increasingly worrying trend where young people are spending hours of unsupervised time on a range of devices, giving them free access to the World Wide Web which, in turn, puts them at significant risk of grooming, cyber bullying, accessing inappropriate material and a range of other harmful outcomes.

As a school we are spending an increasing amount of time trying to 'unpick' incidents which have taken place online, outside of school hours. Not only does this take staff away from delivering an engaging curriculum but it is upsetting to see our young people have been exposed to potentially damaging scenarios which, in the most part, are preventable.

I include some "top tips" below, for parents and carers, so that we can work together to keep our young people safer and happier online.

1. Think carefully about whether your child is mature enough to be given a phone and, if so, whether they need one which gives them full access to social media or a phone with more basic functions only such as calling and text messaging.
2. If you do give them a SMART phone, maintain control over the apps they download and only allow them to use apps that are age appropriate. WhatsApp, for example, should not be used by anyone who is under 16.
3. Know your child's passcode and routinely check their social media accounts, including WhatsApp messages.
4. Implement parental controls on all of your child's devices so they cannot access material that isn't age appropriate.
5. Monitor/supervise your child's internet usage.
6. Agree an allocated amount of time per evening that is for device usage (screen time).
7. Ask your child to hand their phone in before they go to bed so they are not tempted to be on their phone late at night.
8. Most importantly, talk to your child and educate them on the risks associated with social media and unsupervised internet usage.

Below are a number of links that we use in school to support our curriculum and many of them include excellent resources for parents in order to help you navigate the ever-changing landscape of internet safety.



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Internet Safety

**Useful Links:**

General: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

General: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/#guides>

General: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/esafety-leaflets-resources/>

TikTok: <https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/parent-controls-docs/parental-control-tiktok-privacy-and-safety-settings.pdf>

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

I also attach printable leaflets for parents with guides on specific topics such as WhatsApp group chats and general social media safety.

Very best wishes

Yours faithfully



Mr Walsh  
Headteacher

