



Safety, filtering and monitoring at school.



Staying up to date at home.



Advice and tips from our experience.

Following our very successful recent Online Safety Parents' Information Meeting, we thought it would be useful to send home some information about Online Safety to help support parents in this tricky area.

The internet is an integral part of everyday life for many people these but even more so for our children. It enables them to have access to information, talk to their friends and research information from all around the world. The internet is always developing and growing and this means that there are constantly increasing benefits to using it. However, as we all know, there are times when the internet can have a negative effect on children or be a dangerous place for them to explore without support. It is vital that the importance of staying safe online is discussed not only at school but also at home.



Safety, filtering and monitoring at school.

At school, we have many strategies in place to protect our children and to help to build resilience so that they are knowledgeable and prepared for the many and varied situations which they may encounter when using the internet.

We also use targeted **filtering** and monitoring software to ensure that the content accessed by the children is appropriate and safe. The filtering logs are checked periodically by staff to enable us to react to any concerns or trends.

This filtering system is highly advanced and constantly updating and evolving but it is not infallible and so, as part of the **'digital literacy'** curriculum, children are taught what to do if they do see something they do not like or which makes them uncomfortable.

We also discuss with children how to keep their information safe online and how to safely manage their time online.



Staying up to date at home.

At home, we understand that sometimes parents can have a difficult job keeping up with the fast changing technology available to their children, let alone knowing the dangers they face.

The issues of safety, privacy, online predators and cyberbullying are sometimes complex and it can be a challenge to keep up.

Subscribing to resources such as ParentZone (<https://parentzone.org.uk>) or ChildNet (<http://www.childnet.com>) can help parents to stay up to date and informed of the latest craze and most recent Online Safety information.

We also try to keep you updated with any apps or sites we hear about in school if we believe you need to know more about them, in order to make informed decisions at home.

The best advice we can give you as parents is not just to block everything – that doesn't help children to learn about dangers and how to face them responsibly– but to **talk regularly** to your children about what they're doing online and how it works. You might even learn something yourself!



Advice and tips from our experience.

To help parents negotiate the minefield of Online Safety we would suggest the following advice to help you to support your child to stay safe online.

- We strongly advise **a device-free bedroom policy** to ensure that internet use is supervised and children get adequate sleep. Parents can be surprised to learn that **many children** have **Youtube** channels or broadcast live video from an app on their phone.
- Parents often come under quite a bit of pressure to buy their children a smart phone. Please think about whether smart devices are absolutely necessary considering your child's age. **A more traditional phone will do the important job of giving your child a means of contacting you.**
- Children need to know **what to do** if they are at a friend's house and think a device is being used inappropriately. Please talk to them about this so they feel comfortable telling you.
- Check any **online profiles** (notwithstanding the below) are set to **private** and that only their friends can see information they post.
- **Most social media sites do not allow children under a certain age to join, so please reinforce these rules as they are there for a reason.**
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting or messaging offensive /inappropriate messages or photos.
- **We increasingly deal with issues related to social media in school, particularly with Year 5 and 6 children.** Problems regularly arise because of use of **Whatsapp**, **Instagram** and other social media apps. Often children at this age do not have the maturity to understand the impact of things they say online. Pressures **from use of social media can be intense and there is growing concern about the effect on children's mental health.** Children in upper year groups have told us that they worry about missing out, or what others will say if they aren't part of the 'group,' but many also say that they don't always like the atmosphere on such groups. Parents should think carefully about their child's use of social media and encourage an open approach (for instance, setting up your own profiles and coming to an agreement that you should be added as friends on a social networking site).
- Make sure your child **never accepts a friend request from anyone they do not know in real life.**
- Make sure your child **never posts anything which could reveal their identity** including photographs or videos of them wearing school uniform, club logos or t-shirts with names on etc.
- Make sure your child never posts anything they would not want their parents or teachers to see.
- **Make sure your child knows who they can tell if they feel threatened or someone upsets them.**
- Familiarise yourself with the PEGI ratings for games and ensure that children are playing age appropriate games. These ratings are given to games for very good reasons which may not be immediately obvious – such as easy access to free chat within the game to any other user of any age or the ability for users to post unfiltered content for all to see. **Please visit the PEGI website for more information** <http://www.pegi.info>
- We recommend that all parents visit the following websites for more information on keeping your child safe online:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.net-aware.org.uk

www.getsafeonline.org

We hope that the advice contained in this sheet is helpful and informative. In partnership with you, we want to work to make our young people's online experiences healthy and fun, giving them the tools to make the right choices from the beginning of their digital life.

You can find more information about Online Safety on the school's website, including links to some great Online tools and advice, and the slides from Tim Barette's excellent talk from this week. You can also find an online copy of the 'Digital Parenting' magazine referenced by Tim– an excellent and informative guide for all parents on the topic. Look for 'Online Safety' under the 'Parents' menu.

Thank you.