



Dear Parent/Carer,

Everyone at Bamburgh School hopes that you and your families are well.

As the national lockdown continues, we want to support you as much as possible. We are doing this by asking teachers to keep in contact with pupils, and by sending learning activities home regularly. If you are planning to use other online teaching materials to supplement the work that we are sending, please be aware that not all companies or tutors are reputable, and take care!

We do understand that it can be difficult to motivate pupils at home, and if you feel that your or your child's mental health is being affected by being encouraged to work at home, please let us know.

We are also aware that your child will possibly be online more than usual over the coming weeks, and that this can bring its own dangers. We are sending you some hints about the best ways to safeguard your child online, in the hope that it is helpful. We have looked at different age ranges separately, so that you can choose the advice that is best suited to your family. Please share this information with your son or daughter, and let them know that they can contact us if they are worried about their safety online.

We wish you all well, and look forward to seeing your child when things get back to normal.

Kind Regards,

Mr Nord, Ms Chamberlain, Mrs Nichol

## **Safeguarding your child online**

### **If your child is under 5**

- Start setting some rules, even at this early age ... it's never too early to do things like setting limits for the amount of time they can spend on the computer.
- Make sure devices like your mobile, tablet or laptop are out of reach. Set up passwords/PINs and make sure you keep these details to yourself.
- On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age to enable access only to appropriate content.
- Download parental control software, switch it on and keep it updated. There are many versions on the market, which work in different ways. Some of these are free.



- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Buy or download only apps, games, online TV and films which have age ratings. Check that your child is old enough before allowing him or her to play with or watch them.
- Make sure that grandparents, babysitters and your child's friends parents know your technology rules, so that they know what to do when looking after your child.
- When using public WiFi – for example in cafés or hotels – remember that it might not include parental controls. Innocently letting your child play with your mobile or tablet while you're enjoying a latte may result in them accessing inappropriate content or revealing personal information to people online.
- If you have a family computer or tablet, set the homepage to an appropriate website such as Cbeebies.

### **If your child is aged 6-9**

- On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age to enable access only to appropriate content.
- Download parental control software, switch it on and keep it updated. There are many versions on the market, which work in different ways. Some of these are free.
- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Agree a list of websites with your child that they are allowed to visit and agree with them the kind of personal information they shouldn't reveal about themselves online, such as the name of their school or their home address.
- Set time limits for activities such as using the internet and games consoles.
- Make sure your child is accessing only age-appropriate content by checking out the age ratings on games, online TV, films and apps.
- Discuss with your older children what they should or shouldn't be showing their younger siblings on the internet, mobile devices, games consoles and other devices.
- Discuss with other parents subjects such as what age to buy children devices that connect to the internet.



- Don't be pressured by your child into letting them use certain technologies or view certain online content, if you don't think they are old enough or mature enough... no matter how much they pester you or what their friends' parents allow.

### **If your child is aged 10-12**

- Set some rules for your child before they get their first 'connected device' (mobile, tablet, laptop or games console). Once they have it, it can be more difficult to change the way they use it or change the settings.
- Tell your child that it's very important to keep phones and other devices secure and well hidden when they're not at home, to minimise the risk of theft or loss.
- Discuss with your child what is safe and appropriate to post and share online. Written comments, photos and videos all form part of their 'digital footprint' and could be seen by anyone and available on the internet forever, even after it is deleted.
- Talk to your child about the kind of content they see online. They might be looking for information about their changing bodies and exploring relationships. They also need to understand the importance of not sending other people - whoever they are - pictures of themselves naked.
- Remember that services like Facebook and YouTube have a minimum age limit of 13 for a reason. Don't bow to pressure, talk to other parents and school to make sure everyone is in agreement.
- Explain to your child that being online doesn't give them anonymity or protection, and that they shouldn't do anything online that they wouldn't do face-to-face.

### **If your child is 13 years old and over**

- It's never too late to reinforce your rules ... your child may think they are adult enough, but they definitely still need your wisdom and guidance.
- You may be starting to think your child knows more about using technology than you do, and you may be right. Make it your business to keep up to date and discuss what you know with your child.
- Talk frankly to your child about how they explore issues such as the health, wellbeing, body image and sexuality of themselves and others online. They may be discovering inaccurate or dangerous information online at what is a vulnerable time in their lives.
- Review the settings on parental controls in line with your child's age and maturity and adjust them if appropriate. They may ask you to trust them sufficiently to turn



them off completely, but think carefully before you do this, and agree in advance what is acceptable online behaviour.

- Also talk frankly to your child about how they behave towards others, particularly with regard to what they post online. Talk to them about bullying, and posting hurtful, misleading or untrue comments. Make them aware of the dangers of behaviours like sexting and inappropriate use of webcams.
- Give your child control of their own budget for activities like downloading apps and music, but agree limits beforehand so that they manage their money responsibly.
- Don't give your child access to your payment card or other financial details.
- Be clear in your own mind on issues such as copyrighted material and copying so that you can explain to your child what is legal and what isn't.
- If your child has the technological know-how – and if they are being influenced by others – they could be vulnerable to experimenting with accessing confidential information from the websites of other people or companies. Hacking amongst this age group is very rare, but it does exist. Explain the dangers and consequences.

Here are some questions you could discuss with your children, now that they are older:

- Do you really know everybody on your 'friends list'?
- Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings? Can you show me how?
- Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them?
- Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online?
- Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say? Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were?
- Has anyone at your school, or anyone else you know, taken naked or sexy photos and sent them to other people, or received photos like that?

## **Where can you go for support to keep your child safe online?**

Please report any concerns about your child's safety online to school. You can do this by phone or email ([info@bamburghschool.co.uk](mailto:info@bamburghschool.co.uk)).

There are many other sources of help and guidance, for example:

Child Safety Online: a practical guide for parents and Carers ([gov.uk](http://gov.uk))

Childnet

NSPCC

Thinkuknow



[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

If you think that a crime has been committed, consider reporting this to the police.