Online Safety Information

Wednesday 6th February is Safer Internet Day so to mark this we wanted to send some information out to help you support your son/daughter to stay safe online.

Many young people spend large amounts of time online and this can be detrimental to their health. A large number of our students tell us that they stay up late gaming or sending messages to friends. This can make them tired or short-tempered in school the following day. With half term coming up we would like you to encourage your child to spend some time outdoors, going out with friends, doing some exercise and not spending vast amounts of time online. Spending 3 – 4 hours per day on games such as Fortnite is not uncommon. This is not a huge problem if your child is still socialising face to face, eating properly and doing their school work. If they are online for 5 – 6 hours or more then they are neglecting other parts of their life.

Tips for Parents:

- Check what games/videos your son/daughter is on online and make sure they are age appropriate. Do not allow them to play or view anything that has a rating which is above their age.
- Make sure that all electronic devices are switched off at least 1 hour before your son/daughter goes to bed to allow them to wind down and have a good nights sleep. It is advisable to remove mobile phones and electronic devices from your son/daughters bedroom at night so they can be switched off and are not disturbed during their sleep.
- Check what your son/daughter is posting online to make sure it is appropriate and not unkind to others.
- Talk to your son/daughter about what they do online so you can make sure they are safe and take an interest in what they enjoy.
- Get your son/daughter to download the app 'For me' from the childline site (www.childline.org.uk) – it is an app designed by young people for young people and gives them advice and support

Sites to be aware of:

Tellonym – a site which people can sign up to and then post comments to others anonymously. Unfortunately some of the comments aren't very nice and as they are anonymous you can't tell who has posted them. This can make the person receiving the comments feel very upset, anxious and paranoid about who may have made the comments.

Snap maps, Periscope and other apps with locations – some apps can pinpoint the users location to within a few metres so other users can see where they are on a map. This can be useful as a parent if you want to keep an eye on where your child is, but it can also mean that others can see where your child is. For some this leads to a feeling of exclusion if they can see that their other friends are out and they haven't been invited. It also means that any people who may be grooming children online can also see exactly where they are so can be dangerous. Talk to your child about such apps and check their settings to find out who can see where they are.

Live Streaming Sites – there are a number of sites where you can live stream what you are doing - Facebook live, Twitch, Live me are just a few. These are becoming increasingly popular with young people. On some of these sites other people can 'pay' to watch you live stream and can ask you to do things in return for higher payments. It can be used in positive ways, for examples gamers use live streaming to help themselves get better by watching others. However, it can be used to encourage children to do inappropriate things. Girls get a lot more viewers on these sites than boys. If your child is live streaming, check what they are streaming and make sure they are aware of what is appropriate and what isn't. Report anyone who asks them to stream anything inappropriate.

Support

There are a number of websites you can visit for more information on how to stay safe online and support your child.

www.childnet.com – website containing lots of resources, leaflets and information for parents, students and professionals on a wide range of internet issues

www.thinkuknow.co.uk – contains information and guidance

www.ceop.police.uk – child exploitation online protection, can be used to report concerns about online exploitation

www.childline.org.uk – work closely with the Internet Watch Foundation and may be the quickest way to get inappropriate images taken down from the internet if someone has uploaded them. They also have a helpline and an app that can be used for support

www.iwf.org.uk – Internet Watch Foundation who work to try and keep the internet a safe place to be