Friday 20th December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin the festive period I would like to offer some advice and support regarding your children's safety online. I'm sure the Christmas period will see an influx of electronic devices and if not certainly an increase in time spent on such devices by families. As part of our routine Computing and Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) teaching we have been educating the children in keeping themselves safe online, as well as acting responsibly towards others and thinking about the ramifications and impact of posts made now on their future.

Parents are increasingly raising concerns about language children are using online, including headsets in gaming; photo sharing, social media posts children have read or written and times that devices are being used.   We are regularly asked for advice about: apps, appropriate age related games, chat groups, and messaging for children to use on their electronic devices; with this in mind I would like to highlight the 5 digital parenting rules that really matter as written by parentinfo.org:

1. **Building a child's digital resilience will keep them safer than blocking or filtering**
- Allowing your child to self-regulate by encouraging their online interests, discussing boundaries and being available for support if they need it is far more effective than content blocking tools.
2. **Don't limit the talk you have with your child to 'the online safety conversation'**
- If your child approaches you about something that has worried them online make sure that they are able to talk to you about what to do if they see something that upsets or worries them. Explain that they won't get into trouble for making a mistake and that you can help them sort things out.
3. **Balance taking an interest in your child's online activities with giving them the space to be independent**
- While co-playing your child's favourite game or organising online activities together might be a good way of getting to explore what they like to do online and what they're good at, make sure you give them the space they need to internalise safety messages, make their own decisions and establish their own identities online.
4. **Don't be afraid to set boundaries – including monitoring your child's messages/browsing.**
- Set expectations of how they should behave towards others online – their friends and people they don't know. Discuss rules about sharing photos and images of themselves and others: Can they bring phones and tablets to the table at meal times? Can they have them in their bedrooms?
5. **Concentrate on <u>how</u> children use digital media rather than for <u>how long</u>**
- Parents should focus more on the context and content of their child's digital media use rather than the time they spend on screen, as well as the connections they make through it.

http://parentinfo.org/article/the-5-digital-parenting-rules-that-really-matter

In addition to this I have provided some websites and safeguarding sites that we find useful when parents approach us to talk about the above concerns.

https://www.net-aware.org.uk/   https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/   https://parentinfo.org/

Wishing you a very merry and safe Christmas, looking forward to seeing you in 2020!

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ainsworth
Designated Safeguarding Lead