KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE FROM ONLINE RISK

Welcome to our first edition of our E-Safety Newsletter for Parents.

What is 'e-safety' and why should it concern you as a parent? What are the risks to children? Surely the computer or Playstation should be safe. Have you just bought your children a nice new smartphone so that they can get in touch with you in case of an emergency? What are they using it for and what are the risks?

These are the important questions that we ask ourselves as parents and it is vital that we know the answers so we can protect our children as much as possible.

"...among those who use the internet, weekly hours online have risen from over 9 hours in 2007 to around 15 hours for 5- to 15-year-olds in 2016, with even the 3- to 4- year-olds who go online doing so for some 8 hours per week."

OFCOM (2016)

Technology developing rapidly and is a useful tool we can use to entertain, educate and connect with others around us. Unfortunately there is always people abuse this luxury we have and can cause misery to others.

Key Vocabulary

Predators – people who prey on children for their own gratification.

Cyberbullying-bullying using technology.

Trolls – People who take pleasure out of deliberately making other people miserable.

Radicalisation – using the internet to express extreme views in hope to attract vulnerable people to those views.

MITIGATION - This is reducing the risk to the children, and stopping children taking risks. It can be accomplished in a variety of ways, for example using technology to reduce time spent on the internet by the younger children.

EDUCATION

• **Empowering our children** with the information to stay safe on the Internet – a life skill.

• **Raising the awareness with parents** so that they can understand the issues and risks to children when they are using the Internet.

Very briefly that is online safety: risk, mitigation, education. Of course there is much more to it than that but this is the start of a journey for you.   E-safety advisor (2012)

DID YOU KNOW ?

Children say cyberbullying is the worst feature of the Internet. The second worst? Facebook timeline!

Teenagers stress the importance of trust and discussion about online safety between children and parents.

Most kids want to take their own responsibility for protecting themselves online but want support from their parents

(Quotes from UKCCIS 2012)

STAY SAFE ONLINE

CYBERBULLYING

There is no exact definition for cyberbullying but this is as close as it gets:

Cyberbullying is when a child or teenager is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated

If you have ever been bullied yourself you will know what a devastating effect this can have on your childhood, and for some this goes on into adulthood. There is no denying that the prevalence of technology makes it easier to bully or be bullied; PC's, gaming consoles and particularly mobile phones means that a child can be bullied anywhere, from anywhere 24 hours a day. One of the effects of this is depression, and in extreme cases, suicide.

So, how is this bullying happening? It is very easy to blame the technology when thinks are going wrong, but this is much like blaming a car in an accident; the technology is just the mode, it is behaviour that is causing things to go wrong.

A lot of bullying starts "offline", in other words in real life. In days long gone a simple disagreement between friends would have been forgotten the next day, however the "always-on" nature of technology means that this disagreement can continue whatever time of day or night. In particular if this disagreement crosses over to a social networking site like Facebook

other people start to get involved; it then becomes a sustained activity with other "friends" getting involved, and can very quickly get out of hand.

(Extract taken from: E-safety advisor (2012))

If your child has experienced cyberbullying:

(Tips from saferinternet.org.uk)

Let them talk - Give them the space to share what they want to in their way and listen. Try to avoid the temptation to interrupt because you know what's going on, prompt if necessary but let them do most of the talking.

Don't be shocked by what they tell you - If there's one sure way to put a child off seeking help, it's making them feel embarrassed or ashamed about why they're asking for help. Times change and some of the things young people do today may make us cringe sometimes, but the inherent behaviour is the same as it was when we were their age.

Don't deny access to technology - When we speak to young people about barriers to getting help they often share that they are worried that their device may be taken away from them. Reassure them that this won't happen if they speak up about something that has been worrying them online.

Encourage them not to retaliate - Although this can seem like the most tempting thing to do in a situation like this it's very important that you do not retaliate to the cyberbullying. Most of the time the bully is looking for a reaction when they're teasing or calling someone nasty names. Your child may wish to reply and ask the person to stop sending messages however this is not necessary and action can be taken without replying.

Save the evidence - It's important to keep the cyberbullying messages that a child has received, whether through taking screenshots or saving the messages on the device. Saving the messages allows you to have evidence when reporting the cyberbullying.

Talk to their school - Schools play a vital role in the resolution of abusive online behaviours. Take the evidence of bullying and any additional details about the context of the situation and length of time it has been going on for. It is helpful to discuss this with your child and you may want to speak to the school together.

Talk to the police - If you think that your child is in immediate danger don't hesitate to call the police. Equally, if there is a direct threat of violence or harm within any conversation then you may also wish to contact your local police for support. As parents, any incident involving children will be extremely emotive.

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/cyberbullying-advice-parents-and-carers