Protecting your children online

Why this meeting is important:

1) We have increasing incidents of online issues with our children.

2) Children have increasing opportunities at home to use the internet or online gaming.

3) We need to develop your awareness as parents of what children have access to at home.

4) To raise awareness of how we protect children in an online environment.

Promoting E-Safety in school

At Canterbury Cross we are very proactive at supporting the children in our school to be safe online.

Every half term each class has an E-Safety lesson to remind them of how to be aware of the dangers and pitfalls of using the internet.

Whilst we can support the children's use of the internet and digital technology at school, the majority of children's online activity happens at home…

We have become increasingly concerned about incidents of inappropriate online activity that have happened outside of school, but have spilled over into school.

Scary research!!

- Half (49%) of young people questioned say they have given out personal information, such as their full names, ages, email addresses, phone numbers, hobbies or names of their schools, to someone they met on the internet.

- By contrast, only 5% of parents think their child has given out such information. (Source: UK Children Go Online.)

Risks faced by children online.

Online gaming

Cyberbullying   **Grooming**

Losing control over pictures and video

Inappropriate websites

- One of the biggest issues that occurs at our school is the use of gaming and online gaming. Through discussions with children it is clear that many of them have had access to games such as Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto (GTA). These are both 18 rated games for a reason:

GTA

Grand Theft Auto is well known for its violence which includes carjacking, gambling, killing and sexually explicit material.

Call of Duty

Call of Duty allows players to take on the role of a blood thirsty soldier in a number of violent scenarios - arming themselves with an arsenal of weapons including rifles, pistols and grenades.

Advise for online gaming

Limit their time playing games: Some consoles offer parental control features that let parents decide when and for how long their child can play, who they can play with, or even let you "mute" or disable the ability for your child to hear the game's online chat.

Do your research: Make sure you read and understand the ratings for the games that your children are playing. Some game sites have multiple games with different ratings, so check all of them.

Keep the computer out in the open: If your computer is in a central location, you can monitor your kids' online activities.

Explain privacy: Make sure your kids know that they may not send out any materials to fellow gamers that contain private information and/or data.

Enable parental controls: Use built-in parental controls on your Web browser/console

Don't let your children download anything without your permission: This includes cheat programs that may claim to help your child perform better in the game, but really could be carrying malware.

Internet safety

We have lots of issues with our children and their 'online presence'. There are restrictions on creating facebook, twitter and youtube accounts but our children shouldn't have any of these. The content on these sites can be inappropriate for our children.

Examples of children's online mistakes...

Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place via technology. Whether on gaming sites, through a mobile device or via a social networking site, the effects can be devastating for the young people involved.

- With online technologies accessible 24 hours a day, cyberbullying can be relentless. It can also intrude on spaces that were previously personal, for example at home; it can feel that there is no escape from it.

- ***21% of 8 to 11 year olds*** *have been deliberately targeted, threatened or humiliated by an individual or group through the use of mobile phone or the internet.*

Grooming

- You've probably heard of the term 'grooming' before. In essence, this is a process used by people with a sexual interest in children to attempt to engage them in sexual acts either over the internet or in person.

- Sadly, these people do attempt to make contact with children over the internet; this may be in social networking sites, chatrooms or games. They could be by pretending to be someone else, or showing an interest in them.

- It is important that children understand that people like this exist and that they should never do anything online or offline that they are uncomfortable with.

- Grooming is a process of manipulating a child to gain control over them; as a parent or carer you should be approachable so that if your child is concerned about something, they know they can talk to you.

Inappropriate websites

- The Internet is open to anyone to post and create content so sometimes your child may see things they wish they hadn't, or access sites that are inappropriate for their age.

- Inappropriate can mean different things to different people, from swear words to pornographic images or videos, and what is inappropriate for your child will also change as they grow and develop.

- There are a range of things online that might upset children and affect what should be a healthy online experience. It's important to remember that inappropriate content online includes pornographic content, but could also include other content such as race hate, pro eating disorders or gambling sites.

- If your child is using the internet, you should discuss the type of things they might see no matter what age they are.

Losing control over pictures and videos

- Pictures and videos can be copied, shared and spread at great speed. What may have started as being posted for a few friends, can very quickly end up in the hands of the entire school and beyond.

- Some of the main risks with this type of image being in the hands of someone else include:

- **Bullying** – young people can be bullied by others about the content of pictures
- **Distress** – knowing that other people that they do not know are looking at personal pictures can be very upsetting
- **Blackmail** – if the images end up in the hands of someone with bad intentions, they may be used to attempt to manipulate the child
- **Reputation** – once something is online it is very difficult to remove. Therefore images can become part of a young person's 'digital footprint' and potentially affect them in the long-term, such as if someone searches their name as part of a job interview.

Four key principles for parents

1) Educate

2) Protect

3) Monitor

4) Support

1. Educate

- Go on to the social media platforms that they're using and find out what they are all about. If you understand what they're up to online you will be able to better educate and advise.

- It's important that children understand the impact that their online activity can have on themselves and other people, today and in the future.

2. Protect

- There are parental controls and filters available to help protect children from harmful inappropriate content online.

- Your Internet provider should provide parental controls to help you set safer boundaries for your children by filtering or restricting content.

- Devices such as phones, tablets, game consoles and other devices that connect to the internet have parental control settings.

- Filtering can be very effective but no system is 100% fool proof, so education remains key.

3. Monitor

- Keep an open dialogue with your child about their use of the internet.

- Younger children should only use the internet when they are in a family area so you can keep an eye on what they are doing and how they are using it. As they get older they will demand more privacy, but it's important to stay interested and engaged.

4. Support

- We all make mistakes, particularly when we are young. Be approachable. Make sure your children know they can talk to you if something goes wrong. And make sure you know what to do if it does.

- Most sites now have 'report abuse' buttons where you can report inappropriate behaviour and Canterbury have procedures in place to deal with incidents if they do occur inside school.

What to do now…

Check what games your children are playing.

Discuss online safety with your children.

Move the computer to a shared space.

Set parental controls for all of your devices (see the website for explanations).

Keep up to date with latest developments.

Keep checking the school website.