



eSafety Advice for Parents

In school the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning provides for a safe and secure online environment. Many parents and carers do seek advice on how they can help their children to 'Stay Safe' online outside of school. We hope the following provides comprehensive information about online safety and once parents and carers have a wider knowledge and understanding of the issues they can decide what is right for their family.

The internet is an exciting and fun place for adults and children to use and explore educationally and socially. The challenge for parents, carers and teachers is to make sure our children are aware and understand how to be safe when using the internet and related technologies.

HOME AND FAMILY GUIDELINES

- ☺ Talk together and have fun learning together.
- ☺ Keep virus and firewall software up to-date.
- ☺ Remember that passwords should be kept private and not shared with others. Many eSafety incidents relate back to the sharing of passwords
- ☺ Involve everyone and agree your family guidelines and rules. Remember that sometimes what is acceptable for a Year 10 child is not necessarily acceptable for a Year 4 child.
- ☺ Regularly discuss online safety and go online with your children. **Communication** is the key to 'staying safe' online.
- ☺ Enable your 'browser safe' search option and/ or consider using internet filtering software, walled gardens and child-friendly search engines. Critically view all content as some websites are not what they appear.
- ☺ Keep the computer in a communal area of the house, where it's easier to monitor what your children are viewing. Do not let children have webcams, or similar, in their bedroom. **Remember any image, sound or text can be copied and viewed by everyone.**
- ☺ Talk to your children about why they should not to give out their personal details. If they want to subscribe to any online service then make up a family email address to receive the mail.
- ☺ We all love to chat and children are no different. Encourage your children to use moderated chat rooms and never to meet up with an online 'friend' without first telling you.
- ☺ Time spent online should be monitored to help prevent obsessive use of the internet. Children need to follow a range of activities many of which will be offline.
- ☺ Encourage your children, and in fact all family members, to tell you if they feel uncomfortable, upset or threatened by anything they see online.
- ☺ Have proportionate responses if the family guidelines are not followed.

See <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts> for further suggestions

Computers, games consoles, mobile phones etc are the doorway to the online world.

Think before you post online



ASK FM

You may have seen the news stories over the summer about young people being bullied and harassed on social networking sites and this leading to tragic events. One of the sites involved is Ask.fm, in which people can ask and answer questions to each other, often anonymously. This anonymity is open to abuse and the site is frequently used for posting hurtful or obscene messages.

Herts for Learning has created some guidance for young people and their parents and carers about the use of Ask.fm and similar websites. It includes a help sheet and a video which shows how to switch off anonymous posting, report a concern or disable your account if you no longer wish to use it.



THE OVER 13 RULE

It's easy to ignore the terms and conditions of websites and services when we sign up for them, but when we click 'accept' we are saying that we have read and understood them. One of the common terms of social websites is that children under 13 may not sign up. This is true of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many others, as they are complying with a United States law known as COPPA, or the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. This act states that the personal information of children under 13 must not be collected by entities under U.S jurisdiction, which many of the biggest websites and online services are. Whilst this may not be legally enforceable in the UK, it is nevertheless a violation of the terms of the site in question.



SNAPCHAT

A popular service on many young people's mobile phones and devices is Snapchat. This allows people to snap and send photos or videos to each other, but which disappear from the receiver's device after a short time. Thinking that their photo will disappear, never to be seen again, may lull people into a false sense of security, leading them to send photos which they really would not want shared. It is easy for someone receiving a Snapchat image to capture it

permanently on their phone. Whilst the sender may be alerted if this happens, it nevertheless means the picture could be shared beyond its intended audience. 'Leaked' sites have emerged where embarrassing or compromising images from Snapchat are published to the world. The advice must be, very strongly, never to send anything that you would not want to be completely public.

COMMUNICATION APPS



You may have decided that your child will not have a mobile phone until a certain age, but you have allowed them to have a portable gaming or media device. It's important to remember that most of these now go online and have virtually the same functionality as mobile phones. For example, through most tablets or media players (eg iPod Touch) you can send text messages and images, talk to someone via webcam and access social networks. Many of the communication apps available are not aimed at children. For example, the popular 'WhatsApp' messaging service requires users to be over 16. So always check the age requirements and the nature of any app that your child wants on their device.

Useful Web Sites for Parents

www.childnet-int.org - A non-profit making organisation working Directly with children, parents and teachers to ensure that the issues of online child protection and children's safe and positive use of the internet are addressed. Childnet International produce an online CD guide specifically for parents KnowITAll - www.childnet-int.org/kia/

www.thinkuknow.co.uk - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre has set up its own educational website which has been designed and written specifically for children, young people, teachers, parents and carers.

www.getsafeonline.org/ A beginners guide to using the Internet safely, including a quiz and some video tutorials about how to 'stay safe' online.

www.kidsmart.org.uk/ - Kidsmart is an award winning internet safety website for parents and those working with children. It has been developed by the children's internet charity Childnet International and has excellent information on many of the technologies used by children, with guidance on how to 'stay safe' online.

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/2011/10/advice-for-parents/> - Managing your Media - Good Ofcom online safety video and guide for parents/carers

www.bullying.co.uk - One in five young people have experienced bullying by text message or via email. This web site gives advice for children and parents on bullying.

www.chatdanger.com/ - This website is about the potential dangers with interactive services online like chat, IM, online games, email and on mobiles. It provides information, advice, true stories and games. The resource page also contains a number of links to other useful websites.

<http://parents.vodafone.com/> - Vodafone have developed this website in conjunction with mumsnet. It is very accessible and provides information and guidance to parents with understanding their child's digital world and get more involved.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information such as Facebook Privacy Settings, Questions you can ask your children and AskFM guidelines can be found on our school website on the front page 'eSafety' – www/hgs.herts.sch.uk