Keeping Young People Safe Online: A Simple Guide for Parents/Carers

With schools now working online, it has never been more important to protect our students when they are using the internet. The following presentation will provide you with a few tips to ensure young people are safe online!

In the current climate, the internet is a fantastic resource, but it is still crucial that we use it correctly. We all have a part to play in this!

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Using Social Media Safely: A Few Tips

- **Research the age restrictions of apps – don't refer to the information given in app stores as it is not always correct.**
- **Remind young people to set social media accounts to 'private' – apps are set to 'public' by default once downloaded.**
- **Do your children understand what is 'safe and unsafe' to post online? Please remind them that once something is posted, it can be very difficult to remove it.**
- **Parents/carers ideally need to sit, discuss and walk through social media platforms and instant messenger apps with their children – i.e. you can set up 'family safety mode' with certain apps.**
- **Be careful sharing your location. Ideally children and young people should have their location services switched off on their phones, or only share their location with selected family and friends.**

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Using Social Media Safely:A Few Tips

- **Have a conversation about who your children are following, speaking to and/or engaging with online. Ask how these people make your children feel? E.g. does this person you follow make you feel good or bad about yourself?**

- **Agree on a realistic time limit as a family, for gadgets and use of social media. Encourage young people to come away from technology an hour before bedtime.**

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Tik Tok

- **TikTok is a social media app. It is not new, previously operating under Musical.ly up until 2017, after which it was bought out and relaunched as TikTok. Users create short video clips of up to 60 seconds.**
- **It is most popular with young people under 16, with an age restriction of 13. Once the app has been downloaded users have instant access to videos, however in order to comment, like or share users must create an account.**
- **Users can sign up via linking their social media platforms, or create entirely new accounts by inputting a mobile phone number or an email address.**

General Concerns

- **Users, especially young people, do not know how to report concerns through the app, or engage elsewhere for help.**
- **TikTok does not have strong enough policies in place regarding user privacy and security, or sharing information.**
- **Various video challenges are currently circulating on the app, encouraging young people to do dangerous and/or inappropriate things.**
- **Young people posting videos and offering up personal information - E.g: posting videos while wearing school uniforms.**
- **There is an issue with young people being exposed to, or viewing, sexual content. As well as hearing inappropriate language, or posting inappropriate videos themselves.**

What you can do?

- **Remind young people and parents to set accounts on TikTok to private.**
- **Communicate with young people around what is considered 'safe and unsafe' to post online.**

Online Gaming:A Few Tips

- **Games come with age ratings, or a PEGI rating. Do your research before you download the game. Some games may appear child friendly but still promote violence and/or sexual content.**
- **Games come with 'chat' features that allow players to communicate with each other. You can chat verbally through a headset, or through an instant messaging function.Make sure young people and children are making safe connections online, especially as personal information is often given out accidently whilst gaming.**
- **Bullying can be a big concern in the gaming world, and so can online conversations that contain inappropriate themes and language. Remember, it may not always be other young people playing these games, at times your children could be interacting with adults.**
- **The longer you play games the better you become.This can have a huge impact on the behaviour of children and young people, and of course their sleeping patterns. Try and keep technology out of bedrooms, and encourage a good night's sleep by coming away from tech an hour before bedtime, and work with your children set realistic time limits.**

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The 4 Ds: Set them up in your home!

Whilst the internet can be brilliant, it is still important that we set clear boundaries and spend quality time with each other too. The 4 Ds is a simple way to ensure you achieve this:

1. **Digital free zones – Keep technology downstairs**
2. **Digital role models – Parents/carers lead by example online and with digital usage**
3. **Digital sunset – Young people need to come away from technology 1 hour before they go to sleep**
4. **Digital detox – As a family try a gadget free day or hour**

Why Not Try An Online Safety Agreement With Your Teenager?

- **Safeguarding teenagers online can be a real challenge as you want them to use the internet, gaming and social media but safely. A fantastic way to keep young people safe online is to work together, have a conversation and put an agreement in place. Young people are going to push boundaries, but don't get mad get curious! We were all young once and it is not easy growing up in this digital world. It is vital young people have a big say in the rules and consequences when building the agreement.**

Things to Consider:

Be positive about using the internet, don't forget to focus on positive online behaviour as well. The agreement has to be reviewed and be flexible- especially for teenagers The agreement will only work if everyone buys into it, including parents and carers. Example on the next slide!

An Example of an Online Safety Agreement

Please fill in the following boxes:

Who is the agreement for?	Names:
How are we going to keep safe online? What rules will we follow?	
What are the consequences going to be if the agreement is not stuck to?	
When will the agreement be reviewed?	Date:
Signed	

Reporting Concerns

If you have any concerns with regards to the online safety of a young person, then please click on the link below:
https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

For more information on online safety, please click on the following link:
https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/help-and-protection-for-children/Pages/online-safety.aspx