

St John's RC Primary School

Keeping our children safe online



Technology is changing so fast that it is hard for us all to keep up with it. Primary age children who have grown up with it are comfortable using it in a way that parents sometimes aren't. Whilst in many ways our lives have changed for the better with these technological advances, we all need to be aware of the increasing risks and dangers our children face when using the internet, messaging systems, social networking and apps.

A very frightening fact is the average age that children being groomed through internet and messaging usage has dropped from 15 years to 12 years in the

last two years in Manchester alone. This has been via social networking sites like Facebook and messaging through BBM. We want to work in partnership with you to support our children and help you reduce risk at home too.

We are aware of children at St John's who have already been affected by these issues so we want to help prevent others having the same problems.

Please take some time to read this leaflet and to talk to your child about staying safe.



Top Tips

- **Talk to your child about what they're up to online.** Be a part of their online life: find out what sites they visit and what they love about them. If they know you understand they are more likely to come to you if they have any problems.
- **Watch Thinkuknow films and cartoons with your child.**
- **Encourage your child to go online and explore!** There is a wealth of age-appropriate sites online for your children. Encourage them to use sites which are fun, educational and that will help them to develop online skills.
- **Keep up-to-date with your child's development online.** Children grow up fast and they will be growing in confidence and learning new skills daily. You need to keep up!
- **Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world.** Think about what they see, what they share, who they talk to and how long they spend online.
- **Keep all equipment that connects to the internet in a family space.** For children of Primary School age, it is important to keep internet use in family areas so you can see the sites your child is using and are aware if they see something they don't want to see.
- **Know what connects to the internet and how.** Nowadays even the TV connects to the internet. Make sure you're aware of which devices that your child uses connect to the internet, such as their iPod or games console. Also, find out how they are accessing the internet – this will affect whether the safety settings you set are being applied.
- **Use parental controls on devices that link to the internet, such as the TV, laptops, computers, games consoles and mobile phones.** Parental controls are not just about locking and blocking, they are a tool to help you set appropriate boundaries as your child grows and develops. They are not the answer to your child's online safety, but they are a good start and they are not as difficult to install as you might think.

Under 5's Checklist

START setting boundaries now - it's never too early to do things like set limits for the amount of time they can spend on the computer.

KEEP devices like your mobile out of reach and make sure you have passwords/PINs set up for the times you might lend them to your child.

CHECK age ratings on apps, games, TV and films before streaming or downloading.

EXPLAIN your technology rules to grandparents, babysitters etc, so that they stick to them when they're looking after your child.

SET the home page of the family computer or tablet to an appropriate website like CBeebies.

6-9's Checklist

CREATE a user account for your child on the family computer with appropriate settings & make the most of Parental Controls & tools like Google Safe Search.

AGREE a list of websites they're allowed to visit & the kind of personal information they shouldn't reveal about themselves online (like the name of their school or their address).

DECIDE time limits for things like using the internet & playing on games consoles.

BEAR in mind what older siblings might be showing them on the internet, mobiles, games consoles & other devices & agree some rules as a family.

TALK to other parents about their views & don't be pressured by your child into letting them use new technologies.

10-12's Checklist

MAKE sure you've set some tech boundaries before they get their first mobile or games console – once they have it in their hands it can be more difficult to change the settings.

REMIND your child to keep phones, etc well hidden to minimise the risk of theft

TALK to them about what they post & share online – written comments, photos & videos form part of their digital 'footprint' & could be seen by anyone & available online forever.

DISCUSS the kind of things they see online – they might be looking for more information about their changing bodies & exploring relationships for example

HOLD the line on letting your child sign up for services like Facebook & YouTube that have a minimum age of 13.

What is 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 those 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.

- **Tell your child that if they are being bullied to always keep the evidence.** Whether it's a text message or email, tell them not to reply to the bully or delete the comments. Ask your child if they know the bully or where the messages are coming from. If it is someone within the school environment it can usually be dealt with quickly and effectively with assistance from the school.
- **Offer reassurance and support.** Your child may be in need of emotional support or feel like they have nowhere to turn. It is rare that cyberbullying is only taking place online and is often someone your child knows through school or a group they attend.
- **CyberMentors.** This is an online counselling service with a difference; the counsellors are also children and young people. This site has proved very popular and offers practical advice - www.cybermentors.org.uk
- **Block the bullies.** If someone is bullying your child on a social networking or chat site encourage them to block or delete the individual so that they can't be contacted by them again.
- **Report any bullying content to the website it's hosted on.** If content has been posted which is upsetting your child (for example a video or image), you should report it to the website where it occurs. Learn how you would report content on sites like Facebook and YouTube; every site is different. Contacting the website is the only way to get the offensive content removed, unless it is illegal. In cases of illegal content for example indecent images or videos of young people under 18, contact your local police (dial 101) or report it to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection, www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-report).



S T O P
cyberbullying



What apps is my child using?



iMessage/Text - sending messages or photos between devices. Beware of cyberbullying.



BBM - Blackberry's free messaging system for sending messages or photos.



Whatsapp - messaging app with **minimum age limit of 16** to open an account. Can post pictures/video.



Instagram - photo sharing site, **age limit is 13**. Images can easily become public and once uploaded remain online.



Twitter - microblogging site for posting images/info (tweets). Beware of malicious or bullying tweets.



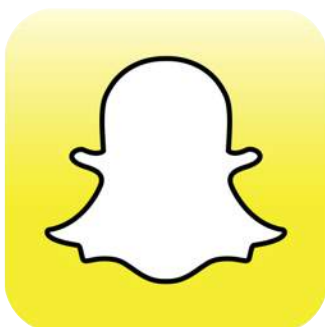
Ask.fm - Anonymous users ask anonymous questions. Heavily linked to cyberbullying and some suicides. **Age limit is 13**.



Facebook - social networking site. **Age limit is 13**. Beware of accepting friends you don't know and bullying.



YouTube - Video sharing site, **age limit is 13**. Content of videos is often inappropriate for young children.



Snapchat - photo sharing app that lets users share their photos for a few seconds before they 'disappear'. Heavily criticised for making it easy for children to be stalked or groomed. **Age limit is 13**.