

St Mark's C of E Junior School

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Dear Parents/Carers

Re: eSafety at St Mark's 2020**Safer Internet Day 2020**

We recently celebrated Safer Internet Day 2020. We had a useful week looking at how children use the internet and how they can be safe and responsible online.

Good knowledge

Overall, I was impressed with children's responses during discussions - they were aware of dangers and how to keep themselves safe. What I cannot tell however, is how well they carry this out in practice - that's where you come in as parents as you are able to monitor children's use of the Internet to make sure they are safe.

Balance

It was also pleasing to hear that children were involved in a wide range of activities that don't involve the Internet: hobbies, sports, clubs, physical activities, musical, crafts and skills. It is so important that children have a balanced diet of activity which will provide growth and development mentally, physically and socially.

Children's concerns

Among children's concerns about the Internet were being hacked, bullied and strangers finding out about them - although these were expressed as fears not reality. Though I am pleased they are aware of these dangers, we don't want children to be scared of going online. There is a delicate balance that we need to strike when teaching children about online safety - we neither want them to be constantly in fear nor do we want them to be unaware of real dangers and how to avoid them.

Safety steps

Perhaps this analogy can be helpful. Most children are not unduly concerned about being in town. Appropriate safety measures like staying with parents, not talking to strangers, not going off alone into unknown places help keep us safe and confident in town. If we apply the same sort of rules to the Internet, then we should be able to reassure children that they can be safe and confident online. What are the equivalent safety measures online...? This will change as they grow, but here are a few to consider:

- Filtering - installing software or apps that limit screen time or the sort of content children can access, for example Norton family;

- Monitoring - installing apps that monitor usage, or just regularly checking children's activity yourself, screen time, reading their WhatsApp chats or browsing history;
- Guidance and purpose - suggesting online projects or doing an online project with them.

Life experience

There are dangers that children may not understand or be able to detect easily because they are young and not life-experienced, for example:

- Addiction - many children said they were angry when they came off their devices
- Grooming - we need to be vigilant and check online communications with an adult eye

Behaviour online

One question that we considered as part of Safer Internet Week was: How can we make the Internet a better place? What steps are we taking to prevent our children being exposed to or take part in potentially unkind interactions online? How are we training our children to play their part in a positive, affirming society?

THINK

A very useful aide mnemonic is THINK. It is useful for judging what we should and shouldn't say face to face or online. Often we can claim something is true but often it is not helpful or kind so say it. There's often "one more fact".

Before you speak:
THINK

T = Is it True?

H = Is it Helpful?

I = Is it Inspiring?

N = Is it Necessary?

K = Is it Kind?

WhatsApp

We are concerned about the scale of communication on WhatsApp. There appear to be large groups and it is causing problems that in school.

A few questions to consider

- Why is the recommended minimum age for this app 13?
- Who is monitoring this - are all parents aware and checking appropriateness of communication regularly?
- What pressure are children under to be part of these groups?
- Is it healthy that a child wakes up to 1000 new messages?

Survey

Here are some headlines from a survey that the children took

- YouTube, TikTok, FIFA, ROBLOX - are you aware of the dangers of these? Check out the posters from National Online Safety - see resources.

Resources

- Children's top apps are: YouTube, TikTok, FIFA, ROBLOX. Are you aware of the potential dangers? Posters on these and other apps: National online safety posters <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>
- Internet matters TikTok page: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/tiktok-safety-guide-for-parents-to-support-young-people-on-the-app/>
- Vodafone digital parenting <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting>

- Common sense media - <https://www.common sense media.org/>
- Family online safety institute - Good digital parenting <https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/>
- How to keep kids safe online in 2020 <https://tutorful.co.uk/guides/how-to-keep-kids-safe-online>
- Videos
 - Surf rap video <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2019/sid-tv-2019/sid-tv-2019-surf-feat-christian-foley-film-11>
 - Own it video <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/its-personal/spoken-word-pupils?collection=your-online-identity>
 - Let's fight it (Cyberbullying) <https://www.childnet.com/resources/lets-fight-it-together>
 - Jigsaw (Grooming) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IB-sqbHSkpU>

Keeping our children safe

I hope you can continue to join with us in protecting and educating our children, fostering good habits which will equip them well for life and using the Internet for everyone's good. Ultimately, it is about keeping our children safe, healthy, happy - developing their brains, looking after their physical and mental health and wellbeing and developing a real understanding of the world, not dictated by what they see on their screens.

Get in touch

If you have any concerns, please speak to your child's teacher, Norma, me or any member of staff.

Yours faithfully

Ben Williams

Mr B Williams

Computing Subject Leader