USEFUL ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Technology is changing the way we live and think. As you know, there are so many positives to the Internet and technology around us, but we also need to consider the negative aspects.

Positive aspects of the Internet and Apps

- Help with research and creativity
- Cheap or free communication and collaboration
- Easy to create and publish content
- Great for children to develop future job skills
- Introduces the world of commerce and business
- Encourages creativity and individualism
- Children feel they have 'ownership' of the Internet

Negative aspects of the Internet and Apps

- Cyber bullying and lack of appropriate rules
- Online privacy and personal information could be stolen or hacked
- Digital footprint, your reputation
- Sexting, grooming, pornography and inappropriate material
- Sharing of images (nudes or semi nudes)
- Illegal downloads and copyright
- Spam, phishing, viruses and malware
- Children lying about their age to get onto social media.
- Continual pressure to reply to comments, emails, etc

Children decide for themselves what is and is not appropriate and self-regulate their actions. Schools and parents/carers have a huge role to play in providing guidance rather than imposing rigid rules and sanctions as an initial measure.

REMEMBER the minimum age requirement to register for the main social media sites is 13 years of age.

KEY TIPS to Help Support your Children when ONLINE

- Check what your children are doing online.
- As they get older, ensure they become more resilient to the pressures associated with the Internet.
- Be aware who your children are talking to online. Make it clear that people they don't know are strangers.
- Explain why your children should not give out personal details online.
- Emphasise that having many different 'followers' or 'likes' does not necessarily make them popular.
- Explain to your child that nothing is private on the Internet - anything can be copied, whether it be private pictures, comments or messages.
- Point out that your child should always consider what an employer or partner might be able to find about them on Google in 5 to 10 years' time.
- Avoid replying to junk, spam or phishing emails, or opening attachments which might contain viruses or malware.

- Make sure that children become better critical thinkers and can evaluate content on the Internet such as propaganda.
- Ensure your child does not meet up with online friends.
- Create a positive environment where your child can be open and inquisitive and feel confident discussing their online experiences, whether positive or negative.
- Teach your children how to block and report any behaviour or content which makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Investigate ways in which you can set parental controls on devices and home broadband.

Useful general links for help and support on all E-safety issues.

- **https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/ (Recommended** to all students to look at for help and support)
- **https://www.internetmatters.org**
- **https://www.commonsensemedia.org/**
- **https://www.childnet.com/**
- **https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/**

Useful websites linked to online issues please refer to links for help and support.

How to choose a strong password
http://www.bu.edu/tech/support/information-security/security-for-everyone/how-to-choose-a-strong-password/

Grooming
https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/Get-help/Reporting-an-incident/ or
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming/

Sexting
https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/ or
https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/sexting/

Cyberbullying
https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/
Age-appropriate advice for parents regarding both e-Safety and cyber bullying, including how to discuss specific issues.

Facebook help
https://www.facebook.com/safety

X help
https://about.twitter.com/en_gb/safety.html

Instagram help
https://help.instagram.com/

Parental controls
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
Free telephone advice on all things e-safety, including practical guidance on setting up parental controls - 0808 800 5002

Snapchat
How do I report abuse or illegal content on Snapchat? – Snapchat Support

Fraud/identity theft
https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/

Phishing
https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/phishing

Home internet security
https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers
A "How to" guides for setting up parental controls on a range of devices, including Xbox, PlayStation, TV on demand (eg iPlayer) and your Internet router/Wi-Fi box. Games and resources are also available on the main site at: **https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/**

Apps
Checking which apps are suitable for your child/ren is vital to keeping them safe online, the following link is an easy way to see if an app is appropriate and is colour coded to give you guidance on suitability.
https://smartsocial.com/app-guide-parents-teachers

The list that follows is not a definitive list and highlights some of the more popular apps, please visit the website to see in detail more about the safety of particular apps your young person uses.

GREEN ZONE: Here are the few apps considered to be safe for Teens and Tweens

The internet can be a dangerous place for teens. However, these apps are the "lesser of three evils" as they can be used to help a pupil (14+ years of age) shine online to impress colleges and future employers. When used wisely with our social media formula, these apps will help your children adjust their Google results to create a portfolio of positive online accomplishments. If your children want to have profiles on these networks/apps, please consider having a dialogue with them and knowing that these networks are the place to start on social media. At the bottom of this page are listed bad apps (red zone) which we suggest you do **not** allow your children to access/have/use.

Facebook   Age: 13+

Facebook aims to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. Children tend to share personal information on their Facebook profile. This information is often visible for college admissions officers, and future employers when they search for them.

Facebook Messenger   Age: 13+

Facebook Messenger (owned by Facebook) allows you to chat with anyone on Facebook. To initiate a conversation with users you need to add them to your Facebook friend list. We suggest parents/carers add their children on Facebook and monitor who they are adding as friends.

Instagram   Age: 13+

Instagram is a free photo sharing application that allows users to take photos, apply a filter, and share it on the service or other social networking services. This app is great for showcasing one's accomplishments and adventures. However, children need to be careful with what pictures they do post.

LinkedIn   Age: 13+

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network. It is an important tool for teens who want to improve their Google results when applying to college. It is the best place to start an online image to impress colleges and future employers.

Pinterest   Age: 13+

Pinterest is a visual discovery tool that helps users find and save ideas. It is a great source of inspiration for pupils. They can use Pinterest to find studying tips, DIYs and more. Children can have fun on Pinterest, as soon as they pin pictures that are Light, Bright and Polite.

GRAY ZONE: These apps can be good (and bad) for your Teens and Tweens.

It is recommended you have a dialogue with your children about sexting and inappropriate content if your children have these apps. Although some people are very scared of Snapchat and Vine, I am not against them (since there are way worse apps that your children could be using). It is suggested every parent/carer puts in the time each month to have a dialogue with their children about the apps they are using. This is the best way to keep your children safe (not by restricting the children, but by talking with them).

Bitmoji App Age: 12+
The Bitmoji app allows users to create a cartoon avatar or "emoji" that looks like themselves. Since it's easy to create Bitmojis and share them on other apps, teens could get themselves in trouble if they create an inappropriate Bitmoji that gets shared on social media (or screenshot and shared). Creating a Bitmoji could encourage teens to obsess over their looks which can be damaging for their self-image.

Houseparty App Age 14+
Houseparty is a video chat app that mimics an actual house party where users can move from "room" to "room" video chatting with others. Users can chat with up to eight people at the same time. Houseparty encourages users to have frequent, candid conversations with their family, friends, and friends of friends. Chats are unmoderated which means pupils might encounter inappropriate content or cyberbullies.

Minecraft Age 9+
Minecraft gameplay involves players interacting with the game world by placing and breaking various types of blocks in a 3D environment. While Minecraft may be used for educational purposes, players can also experience bullying, inappropriate content and adult language.

Netflix app Age 12+
Netflix app allows users, with a paid Netflix account, to watch streaming movies and TV shows on a mobile device. You must be 18+ to start a Netflix subscription.

Roblox Age 12+
Roblox is a user-generated online gaming platform where you can play a wide variety of games and even create your own. However, it is important to be aware of safety concerns such as cyberbullying and predators

SMS Text Messaging Age: No age limits
SMS text messaging is one of the primary apps on all mobile phones. All accounts are connected to phone numbers. SMS messenger is relatively safe for children - trackable and least difficult for parents to monitor.

Snapchat Age: 13+
Snapchat is a messaging service that allows people to send photos and short videos to each other that disappear seconds after opening them. A major concern with Snapchat is how teen Snapchat users use the app, since parents are not on it and content disappears.

TikTok Age 12+
TikTok is a make your own music video app. The app was previously called Musical.ly. Users can watch and create 60-second videos. TikTok released new parental controls in 2020.

WhatsApp Messenger Age 16+
WhatsApp is a mobile messenger that is similar to short message services. Users can share location and contacts with other users. WhatsApp helps children bypass text messaging and communicate with their friends using the app.

X Age 13+

X is an online social network, which allows you to send messages up to 140 characters in length. This is a great app for pupils to share their thoughts and feelings. However, children must also be aware that anyone can view what is posted if their account is public.

You Tube Age 13+

YouTube is a free platform for watching and uploading videos and is owned by Google. Positive videos can turn a pupil's Google results into a three-dimensional version of their college resumé. YouTube also has a multitude of educational videos from which you can learn.

RED ZONE: ANONYMOUS APPS – Here are the apps we consider to NOT be safe for Teens and Tweens.

These apps are not recommended for Teens or Tweens. These apps usually have inappropriate and un-moderated content. Also, they lend themselves to cyberbullying. Often, these apps are anonymous and will encourage children to behave inappropriately. When children use an app in anonymous mode (without it being tied to their real identity) they tend to behave badly. They are also more prone to bullying and predators in this zone.

Ask.fm Age 13+

Ask.fm is a social networking website where people can ask questions, with the option of anonymity. Children often reveal too much personal information on this site, and cyberbullying is very prevalent.

Calculator% Private Photo App Age 17+

The "Private Photo (Calculator%)" app is designed to help children hide photos and videos behind an innocent looking calculator app. This application looks like a calculator but entering a passcode opens a private area.

Discord Age 12+

Discord is a free voice, video and text chat app where users live stream games and internet videos. Like many chat apps, Discord doesn't put out dangerous content, but some people who use it might.

Kik App Age 17+

Kik allows anyone on the app to contact your child and directly message them. It has been known to allow adults to communicate with pre-teens and it is very difficult to discern who is a predator and who is real. Some adults have been known to use this app to pretend they are tweens and teens. Kik allows pupils to bypass text messaging features of their phone. Users can connect with anyone on the network and are not limited to their phone's contact list.

Meetmeapp Age 17+

This app is designed to help strangers aged over 17 to connect based on similar interests and location. Police warn predators use this app, you can private message and participate in live stream.

Only Fans app Age 18+

This is an adult website, popular amongst influencers, models and celebrities for making money but has become a hotspot for pornographic and sexual content.

Reddit Age 17+

An app for source of news and information and connections. A place to connect for like minded individuals, but can be dangerous for teens.

Telegram app Age 17+

Telegram messenger is an app that offers unlimited instant messaging, providing the possibility of extra secrecy with encrypted chats.

Tinder app Age 17+
A dating app that shows other Tinder users nearby who share similar interests or mutual friends. Users anonymously swipe right if they're interested in seeing a user's profile or they swipe left to pass. If both users express interest or "swipe right" on each other then those users become a match. Once a user has been matched with another Tinder user they can start chatting with each other in the app. Users can post images and messages as "moments," which exist for 24 hours and then disappear. When signing up, users must use a Facebook profile to verify their authenticity to Tinder

Tumblr Age 13+
Tumblr is one of the world's most popular blogging platforms. Users tend not to use their real names, so it can be hard to find blogs without knowing a specific username. All accounts are public and content goes unmonitored.

WhatsGoodly Age 17+
WhatsGoodly is an anonymous, location-based, social polling application designed for college students. It has a 17+ age restriction, but younger pupils can still see polls and vote. There are a lot of questions about dating, relationships, alcohol and smoking on the app.

Whisper Age 17+
Whisper is an anonymous social network that allows people to express themselves. Whisper reveals a user's location, which makes it easy for people to arrange to meet up. This also makes it easier for predators to locate and connect with users.

Wishbone Age 13+
Wishbone is a comparison app, marketed to girls, that allows users to vote or create polls. Wishbone users can create any type of poll, including polls that are not appropriate for teens. This app is popular with pupils, and the comment section is used to bully other pupils.

Yik Yak Age 18+
Yik Yak acts like a local bulletin board for your area by showing the most recent posts from other users around you. The app is popular with high school pupils, and it is often used to harm the self-esteem of fellow pupils.

You Now Age 13+
YouNow is a popular broadcasting platform where children watch and stream real-time videos. Users decide whether broadcasters should continue their live videos with thumbs up and thumbs down voting. Anyone can record the videos posted, take screenshots and bully others with the recordings.