Upper Wharfedale School

Parents' Safeguarding Bulletin
October 2020   —   Online Safety

We have all realised the importance of the internet over the last few months for remote learning, allowing us to work from home or for keeping in touch with friends and family. We would however encourage you to read this guide to find out how to protect your child in the virtual world.

Introduction

The internet is an integral part of children's lives these days. It opens up many educational and social opportunities, giving them access to, quite literally, a world of information and experiences.

Whether on a computer at school, a laptop at home, a games console or mobile phone, children and young people are increasingly accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are.

As you would protect your child in the real world, you will want to make sure that they are safe whatever they are doing. If your child understands the risks and can make sensible and informed choices online, they can get the most from the internet and stay safe whilst doing so – particularly from those people who might seek them out to harm them.

How can you protect your child online?

The answer is simple. If you understand the internet and understand what the risks are, there are a number of things you can do that will make your child safer online. According to Ofcom 7 out of 10 young people aged between 12 and 15 years old in the UK have a social network profile. A large percentage of these access these sites through their mobile phone rather than a computer. This has changed the way that children and young people communicate with their friends and family.

What do I need to know about it?

On the whole, young people have a very positive experience surfing the web or chatting with their online friends; however, as a parent or guardian there are some potential risks you should be aware of:

Cyberbullying   Downloading and Copyright

Excessive use of technology   Identity theft

Inappropriate and harmful content   Illegal content

Grooming

Encourage kids to report inappropriate behaviour

If your child is experiencing problems or is being cyberbullied encourage them to come to you for help. If they are uncomfortable speaking with you, tell them to speak with a trusted adult - an aunt, uncle, teacher, or older sibling - to lend an ear.

Be sure your child knows how to report abuse or inappropriate behaviour to social networking sites. With Facebook, for example, they can report abuse by clicking the report link. Other social network sites also have reporting mechanisms.

What to talk to your child about?

Make sure your child knows how to change their privacy settings.

Don't allow anyone to bully you online, encourage your child to speak to an adult or teacher.

Not to spend too much time online, using a mobile phone, gaming console etc.

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What can I do as a parent?

- Good communication between a parent and child is critical: Check the privacy policy of your child's internet, mobile, social networking and games providers so that you understand what kind of information they collect and what they use it for.

- Encourage your child to only share their personal information with people or companies they know. Suggest that they use a nickname (not their real name) on websites, chat rooms and other online forums.

- Help them to set up strong passwords (a combination of letters, numbers and symbols) and explain why they shouldn't share them with anyone. Make sure they use a PIN lock on their mobile.

- Discuss the fact that not everyone on the internet is who they say they are. Explain how information they use to register for websites, competitions, downloads and other internet and mobile services could be used by the companies in question (e.g. to send marketing emails).

- Advise your child to get permission from friends and family before taking photos or videos of them and to check that they're happy for the images to be published - not everyone wants to be famous.

- Make sure you have up-to-date anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your child's computer and make the most of built-in tools like pop-up blockers and spam filters.

- Teach them the risks and dangers of sharing passwords, phone numbers, addresses and other personal information.

- Consider where you place your computer keep an eye on what your child is looking at. Be sure you have computer security software with parental controls. Not to spend too much time online, using a mobile phone, gaming console etc.

- Encourage other activities and sports. Ask about your child's online friends, encourage them to have their "real" friends as their friends on social networking sites. If your child has an online profile ask if you or a close relative can be an online friend (to help and support them).

For further guidance on Tablet/Smartphone safety, please follow the website and video links below:

Smartphone app safety: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Voy9iTRmLo4

Messaging app safety: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMsrBVC-tfM

It can be difficult for parents to keep up to date with the latest technologies that children are using. The following 'Parenting in the Digital Age' website offers advice and resources to help you to keep your children safe: http://www.pitda.co.uk/

For general advice on technologies and information on parental controls available please visit the UK Safer Internet Centre on the following link:

http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers

There is a link on this page to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which provides resources for children and parents giving advice on staying safe online http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

So what are the risks? The risks depend on the access your child has to unrestricted online sites and the way your child uses the internet. There are a number of links on this page giving general online advice as well as more detailed information on specific risks your child may be exposed to.

CEOP's own site which take you directly to their own page for reporting abuse: http://www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse/index.asp

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What to do if something goes wrong? The CEOP website has links for reporting inappropriate online behaviour. Look out for the following symbol on websites or on the CEOP's own site which take you directly to their own page for reporting abuse: http://www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse/index.asp

Cyberbullying

This is bullying but using technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person. A comprehensive leaflet has been published by Childnet International on the subject of cyberbullying which can be accessed through the link on this page (pages 6 and 7 show how technology can be used to bully with advice on contacting service providers if necessary).

Social Networking Sites (including Facebook)

Many children now have online contact with other children through a wide variety of games and social networking sites, including Facebook. Children should not have a Facebook account until they are 13 years old, however we realise that some children may have an account below this age. If your child does have a Facebook account or uses other social networking sites please talk to your child about the following:

- Insist that you know your child's login details.

- Insist that you and other family members are 'friends' on Facebook. (Then any inappropriate content can be monitored.

- Make sure your child 'locks down' their profile to ensure only friends can access their page, pictures etc.

- Make sure any photos or videos are appropriate and don't reveal personal information, such as school uniform details.

- Be aware that it is recommended that school staff are NOT 'friends' with pupils, or ex pupils up to the age of 18, so please don't be offended if any requests are not accepted.

Ensure that your child does not accept strangers as 'friends'. There are people and groups of people who trawl social media seeking to gain access to young people, their images and their contact numbers for illicit purposes. Young people sometimes accept complete strangers as 'friends' in an attempt to make themselves appear more popular without realising how much risk they exposing themselves to.

Be aware of 'App hiders'

These "**app-hider apps**" **can** help you change the names and icons for the **apps** on your screen, or hide your **apps** completely.

SNAPCHAT

A popular app that allows users to capture and send photos and short videos that self-destruct after a certain amount of time. When users send a message, they get to decide how long it will live (between one and 10 seconds) on the receiver's device. After that, it's history… or so the sender thinks.
short time.

Snap Chat has a feature called SnapMaps which allows users to see the location of their contacts. This

feature allows others to accurately pinpoint where you are. There are three possible privacy settings:

- Ghost mode , where only you can see your position;

- My Friends mode, where any contact can see your loction; and

- Select Friends mode , just those who you choose can see you

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Yubo or Yellow

- Calls itself a platform to chat and live stream with friends

- In the iOS App Store, it is rated for users 17+ and on Google Play, it is marked 'T' (Teen).

- New users need to provide personal details such as name, date of birth, phone number and more. A website called 'Yoti' allows the user to verify the account. A yellow tick appears on verified profiles

- Users of the app can swipe right to say 'yes' and left for 'no', exactly as on Tinder and other dating apps. On Yubo, if both parties say 'yes', they are matched and can then chat and follow each other on Snapchat or Instagram.

- Users can also host live video streams or chats which are open for viewing. So strangers and friends alike can view such streamed events!

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A mobile app which is used for creating and sharing short videos with very limited privacy control making students very vulnerable to bullying and explicit content

Tellonym is an app designed for older teens that lets users leave anonymous comments for other users. People can register using either an email or a phone number and can search for friends via phone contact lists. The app can be linked to Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat accounts, which means inappropriate messages can be accompanied by inappropriate visual content (images containing references to sex, drugs, violence, alcohol, or smoking).

With anonymity as the point of the app, the potential for cyberbullying is high. As with many apps like this, the terms of service aren't consistent: In some places it's indicated that a teen must be 17 to download and in others the requirement is 13.

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

(Ages specified in terms as of 2014)

action for children

Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Pinterest
Google+
Tumblr
Reddit
Snapchat
Secret

LinkedIn

WhatsApp

Vine
Tinder

Path

YouTube
Keek
Foursquare
WeChat
Kik
Flickr

13

14

16

17

18

18
(13 with parents' permission)

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