



Safeguarding Newsletter

Christmas 2020 edition



Dear Parents,

We have encountered more issues/concerns this term in relation to children using online apps and games than ever before and it is clear that the Covid pandemic has led to more children spending more time online than ever before.

Children today learn how to use a tablet from a very early age, and as they grow up, they are more tech savvy than us as parents and as teachers. However, it is easy to forget that no matter how great children are with technology, they do not have the life skills of adults to recognise potential dangers, until it's too late. Not everyone on the internet is who they say they are and often, children are only a few clicks away from inappropriate content.

Digital Safeguarding is an important part of our work in school to keep children safe. I am sure you as parents and carers take measures at home to also keep your child/ren safe, however, as is often the case, children know more than we do as parents, as we are not playing the apps and games or accessing the sites that they are.

The internet and all its dangers have evolved tremendously over the last 12 months. People are using the internet much more now as it connects people to the world outside their home. I can imagine that many children this year have asked for either a mobile phone, an Ipad, a laptop or another technical gadget. Keeping children safe online is much more than just ensuring devices in the home have high privacy settings or parent controls.

In January, I will be holding an online session for **parents only** to enhance parental engagement on keeping children safe online. The minute children have access to the internet, then potentially, others have access to them. Children need to understand that just like how they keep safe in the real world, they also need to do so in the online world, and you as their primary educators need to recognise first what the dangers are so you can best protect them.

You will receive an email in January detailing how you will be able to access this online training. Please attend this training as we want to keep children as safe as possible.

Kind regards,

Mrs. Linley

Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer



3 questions we asked our Key Stage 2 children...

8. Do you play online games at home? i.e. Roblox?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	41
● No	11
● Sometimes	28



9. Have you played an online game against another child who is the same age as you but who you have not met in person?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	36
● No	42



10. Have you ever seen something online that you wished you hadn't seen?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	18
● No	46
● Prefer not to say	16



How to help your child/ren...

Talk to your children

- Take an active interest in your child's online life and engage in the digital world with them.
- Let your children teach you about their online world and how they use technology; playing new games and exploring websites together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.
- Make sure your children know that you are safe and approachable; remind them that they can tell you if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable, without being told off or punished.

Please note: 16 children preferred not to say whether they had seen something that they wished they hadn't online.

Would your child tell you?



When purchasing new technology for your child/ren:



- It is vital that we fully understand the capabilities and make informed decisions about new games, apps and devices, before giving them to children as a gift.
- Do your research; ask the shop about pre-installed apps or tools and check whether the device or game has an online component, which allows them to connect with others online.
- Familiarise yourself with the privacy, safety and security tools on new devices; ensure you are in a position to teach your child how to make their accounts private and how to block and report other people online.
- Do not let your child spend too long on the Internet on their own and you should **regularly** share in what they are doing.

FAKE NEWS



Since the start of the Covid pandemic, more children have asked questions about news stories read online that staff in school believe to have been fake news stories. Fake news stories are easily accessible, and often have no censor control. All too often, children too easily believe what they see and social media is influencing more children and glamorizing things that are wrong.

Why is it important to protect children from fake news?

Ensuring that children have better access to reliable information can help them to:

- Have a balanced view of the world around them
- Have informed discussions about issues they are passionate about
- Form a realistic view of different parts of society
- Express themselves online in ways that consider other viewpoints



For further information on supporting your child/ren to recognise fake news, please see the following links:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/protecting-children-from-fake-news/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/tackling-fake-news-misinformation-advice-for-parents/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zmvdd6f>

<https://parentinfo.org/article/coronavirus-how-to-help-children-spot-fake-news>

Please consider how much time your child/ren spend online this Christmas. Now is a good time to put boundaries in place to protect your child/ren. Too much screen time can poorly affect your child's emotional and physical development and wellbeing.

If you would like more support on safeguarding your child at home on the internet. Please speak to one of St. Mark's DSL's - we'd be happy to support you!