St Anne's NS

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This edition of the school newsletter focuses solely on Safer Internet Day (6th February 2018). All information provided is copied from 'A Parents' Guide to a Better Internet', available to download from www.webwise.ie – there are numerous other information sheets on webwise.ie and all parents are encouraged to visit it on regular occasions to keep up to date with current information on this important subject.

Internet Safety – General Tips for Parents

Discover the Internet together
Be the one to introduce your child to the internet. For both parent and child, it is an advantage to discover the internet together. Try to find websites that are exciting and fun so that together you achieve a positive attitude to internet exploration. This could make it easier to share both positive and negative experiences in the future.

Agree with your child rules for internet use in your home
Try to reach an agreement with your child on the guidelines which apply to internet use in your home.
Here are some tips to get started:

- Discuss when and for how long it is acceptable for your child to be online
- Agree how to treat personal information (name, address, phone no, email etc.)
- Discuss how to behave towards others online
- Agree what type of sites and activities are OK or not OK
- Follow the rules yourself! Or at least explain why the rules are different for adults

Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information
A simple rule for younger children should be that the child should not give out their name, phone number of photo without your approval. Older children using social networking sites like Facebook should be encouraged to be selective about what personal information and

photos they post to online spaces. Regardless of privacy settings, once material is online you can no longer control who sees it or how it is used.

Talk about the risks associated with meeting online 'friends' in person
Adults should understand that the internet can be a positive place for children, where they can get to know other young people. However, for safety and to avoid unpleasant experiences it is important that children do not meet strangers they have met online.

Teach your child about evaluating and being critically aware of information they find online
Most children use the internet to improve and develop their knowledge in relation to schoolwork and personal interests. Children should be aware that not all information found online is correct, accurate or relevant. Show your child how to check information they find by comparing it to alternative sources on the same topic. Show them trusted sites they can use to compare information

Don't be too critical towards your child's exploration of the internet
Children may come across adult material by accident on the web. Also, a child may intentionally search for such websites; remember if is natural for children to be curious about off-limits material. Try to use this as an opening to discuss the content with them and perhaps make rules for this kind of activity. Be realistic in your assessment of how your child uses the internet.

Let your children show you what they like to do online
To be able to guide your child it is important to understand how children use the internet and know what they like to do online. Let your child show you which websites they like visiting and what they do there.

Remember that the positive aspects of the internet outweigh the negatives
The internet is an educational and recreational resource for children. Encourage your child to make the most of it and explore the internet to its full potential.

Internet Safety - Advice for Parents of Young Children

It is never too early to think about your child's safety online. Even if your child does not have an electronic device of their own, chances are they will have friends who do. If you are a parent of a young child who is just starting to discover the online world, there are a few things to consider:

Talk about internet Safety with your child:
Have a conversation with your child on some of the important things to watch out for when going online for the first time. Young children will not be aware of any issues, so it is very important to talk with them about who they talk to and about sharing personal information online.

Use Parental Controls:
Most internet technologies have built-in controls that allow you to limit the amount of time your child can spend online, restrict their access to adult content, and switch off functions like shopping and chatting. Filtering controls are particularly useful at preventing young children from accidentally encountering content that is not appropriate for them.

Disable In-App Purchases:
Many apps and games give their users the option of buying additional game functionality, additional points/bonuses and a host of other extras. Children can easily make purchases without even realising. You can disable in-app purchases using your phone or device settings.

Active Safe Search:
Help minimise the risk of your child coming across inappropriate content in response to search queries by activating 'safe search' in your search engine.

Agree on what to do when things go wrong:
We recommend that you speak to your child about what to do if they come across something on the internet that upsets them. This could be closing the laptop lid or turning off the screen and coming to get you.

Set up a Family Email:
Set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online.

Play it Safe:
For young children we recommend that parents choose safe and appropriate games for their child to play online. Most games have a rating you can check to see if they are age appropriate. You should also check if a game allows for player interaction and if there is a safe chat mode.

SCREEN TIME ADVICE

Are you concerned about how much time your child spends on their phone, tablet, or computer? Here are some pointers to help you deal with this tricky issue that is causing conflict in our homes.
It is important to remember that children often welcome time-off from social media and games and can welcome clear guidelines and boundaries in this area.

How much is too much?
Unfortunately, there is no magic number. Children use their devices and computers for lots of different reasons – to learn, to play, and to socialise. The most important thing is to agree clear rules on screen time and set a good example.

Helpful Pointers:

No. 1: Agree a clear set of rules with your child on screen time in the home. Talk to your child on when and where you think it is appropriate to use screens. Agree times when screens are allowed and when they are not allowed in the home. We suggest dinner time, homework time (unless you are using it to help with your homework) and bed time is a good start to the not-allowed list.

No. 2: Do as you say. Modelling behaviour is the most powerful way you can influence your child's behaviour.

No. 3: Restrict the use of computers and devices in the bedroom. Depending on the age of your child you may want to set a curfew or ban devices from the bedroom completely.

No. 4: Buy an alarm clock for your child's bedroom and charge their phones and devices in your room or downstairs at night time. This can be a helpful way of giving them a break from the internet.

No. 5: Try not to rely on screens too much to keep the kids amused. It can be easy to encourage them to pick up the tablet or play a game on the computer to keep them occupied. This only confuses rules on screen time, try and stick to the agreed rules with your child and remember to set a good example.

No. 6: Chat to your child about what they do online and encourage them to use their screen time for learning and education.

No. 7: Pick one evening a week where you do a family activity together, whether it's movie night or games night. Doing activities together as a family will help implement screen time guidelines and offer fun alternatives.

No. 8: Don't have screens always on in the background. Turn off TVs and computers when not in use, these can be distracting for kids if they are trying to participate in another activity.

No. 9: Finally, join in! Why not set some time aside to play your child's favourite computer game and discover the online world together.

Remember to visit www.webwise.ie for further information. You can subscribe to their e-newsletters to receive regular updates.