Stanford School

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Internet Safety

As Christmas is approaching fast and I am sure there will be a vast amount of consoles, games, phones and other pieces of technology in Santa's sack waiting to be delivered, I thought I would send a newsletter to help with the new pieces of technology and ensure that the children are able to enjoy their new gifts as saftelly as possible.

With any new pieces of technology it is always important to research the product and check the safety features available, ensuring that fitering is installed as well as parental controls. In the 'Safety & Well-being'section of the School webpage there are helpful guides to help with different console brands and media sites.

The majority of games provided for X Box and Playstation are targeted for an older audience than primary school children, so it is difficult for parents to maintain the balance of allowing their children to play the popular games and still keep the children safe. The age limits given for these games have been issued for specific reasons, be it inappropriate content or the ability to play alongside other online players who could be of any age, and unknown to the children. It is strongly advised that you research these games to find out what they contain and why they have been given certain age restrictions. It might be an idea to try out the game yourself to enure that there is nothing in the game that you feel would place yout child at risk.

With tablets and apps that can be easily downloaded it can be advisable to link your own phones to theirs so that any apps downloaded appear on your screen also. There are many apps available to allow parental control over phones and tablets. As with the games, it is important that you check out the apps by playing them personally as some apps have unassuming logos which do not reflect the content of the app (There are examples of these also on the e-safety page).

Although the guidelines for social media sites specify ages of 13+ there are children who use these sites with parental permission. Some of the sites used by the children are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and also a site called Tik Tok. As these are social media sites they are aimed for teenagers and do not have site restrictions so children may have access to inappropriate content. The Tik Tok site only has 2 privacy setting either Private or open to the public so anyone has access to what is posted by the user unless sent by a private message. Social media is a great piece of technology aimed to keep people in touch and share their lives and thoughts however this needs maturity to enure that it is used appropriately, sometimes even adults don't manage to get it right!

Whereas children have traditionally been safe when they enter their home, with the use of technology this is not the case. It is important that children using social media know how to use it appropriately and more importantly to know what to do if it is not, and they know how to block or report items causing them distress. Children need to think twice before they post videos, comments or photos as, once they are out there they cannot be retracted easily, or at all, and are open to the scrutiny of the world wide web.

With any part of internet safety the most important thing a parent can do is take an interest in what the children are accessing and talking to the children. If they are wanting to play the most popular game or go one the 'best site' find out why it is so cool and what happens in it. Play the game or app with them, or watch how well they play it and keep lines of communication open about their internet activity.

It is important that when a child is handed a piece of technology that you:

1. Ensure it is equipped with safety features and parental controls

2. Agree clear rules with your child about:
    o What personal information should not be disclosed (e.g.full name, email address, phone number, home address, school name, photos)
    o Time spent online – when, how long…
    o Contacting people online – distinguish between online and offline 'friends'
    o Meeting online 'friends' offline

3. Ensure that you child knows what to do if there is content that they do not like, or find upsetting and that they know how to block unfriendly users.

Please feel free to look at the School web pages where we upload any pieces of advice that we feel may help with keeping your child safe on the internet. If you have any additional concerns please do not hesistate to contact a member of staff.

Yours faithfully

Miss A M Perrin
IT Coordinator