Safe Internet Use - Advice for Parents

We know that many of our pupils will be using educational learning sites, social networking accounts, mobile apps and online games during the school closure due to COVID-19.

As a parent you'll know how important the internet is to children - they use it to learn, play, socialise and express themselves. It's a highly creative place of amazing opportunities. But the technology children use every day can seem a bit daunting and you might worry about the risks your child can face online - such as bullying, contact from strangers or the possibility of them seeing illegal or inappropriate content.

You can engage with your children regarding their use of the internet while at home. Here are some conversation starter ideas from www.childnet.com

- Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.

- Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?

- Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.

- Encourage them to help. Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.

- Think about how you use the internet as a family. What could you do to get more out of the internet together and further enjoy your lives online.

Many of the app and games have age restrictions. The terms and conditions for many of these accounts say that you have to be 13 or older. Anyone under the age limits who joins these networks is presenting themselves as older than they are which is a breach of the terms and conditions. Some other people join these networks and pretend to be younger than they are specifically to gain access to children. This could put your child at significant risk.

A comprehensive list of apps and games and their age restrictions can be found on your school's website under Parents information entitled "Online Safety".

Internet Safety Resources

There is a great new online safety tool designed for parents launched by the Department for Education called Parent Info and it can be found at https://parentinfo.org/. It's has advice on everything from keeping children safe from online trolls to WhatsApp - a guide for parents.

Please see the school website for a full list of websites regarding Internet Safety Resource and further guidance.

If you are unsure about your child's use of social sites and mobile apps or the computer generally, please use the ThinkUKnow website – https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/. Work through some of the activities with your child so they know about appropriate behaviour and how to stay safe.