Guidance document for Staying Safe online for parents and carers

Guidance we give your child to stay safe online:

•   Only use your school email address for websites or online learning events.

•   Only access virtual work experiences, workshops and websites recommended by Summerfield Education Centre.

•   Keep camera turned off at all times unless there is a staff member with you.

•   Never give out any personal details about yourself– e.g. location, email address, personal phone number, address.

•   Stay in agreed break out rooms and do not visit any other break out rooms.

•   Work with the staff member allocated to you.

•   If you feel unsafe or are concerned about something, come offline straight away – you can report anything you are concerned about to the school on 0121 779 8090, your parents or Childline if you want immediate support 0800 1111.

Top 10 Tips to help your child:

1. Talk openly with your child about their online activity

As soon as your child starts accessing the internet, talk to them about what they are reading, watching and who they are communicating with online – and keep the conversation going as they grow older.

It's vital to teach them about their online reputation, too, and how they must be careful about how they behave, interact with people and represent themselves in such a public forum. They must always remember that the internet isn't private.

2. Keep screens and devices where you can see them

Always monitor your child's time online, particularly younger children. Keep the computer in a central spot in the home where it's easy to keep an eye on what your child is doing and viewing online. For mobile devices, you can set them to forget Wi-Fi passcodes so your children can not go online without you knowing. You can also try to make an agreement that there are no tablets, laptops or gaming in bedrooms.

3. Know your parental controls

Innocent searches online can lead to not-so-innocent results, so it's wise to know how to use the parental controls/search restrictions offered by web browsers, internet service provider and devices. For example, the SafeSearch Filters feature on Google will block sites with explicit sexual material. To turn it on, go to Settings/SafeSearch Filters. Although not 100 per cent accurate, parental controls can help prevent your child from seeing and accessing most violent or sexual material. See https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/. Paid for security tools and features will offer extra protection and control.

4. Know who your children's online friends are

As adults, we know that some people online aren't who they say they are, but children and young people can be alarming naïve about who they are chatting with if they are not taught to be cyber wise from an early age.

Make sure you become friends and contacts within your child's social media circles and ensure you monitor posts. Your children may resist but tell them that is one of the conditions for you to allow them access

5. Be 'share aware' to protect your privacy

If your child is a regular user of social networks, they must be aware of the risk of personal information or images being made public once they post it. While they won't fully understand the consequences of revealing personal information online, you should teach them to be cautious and thoughtful about what they post and share. Encourage your children to ask themselves before posting anything if the information (i.e. name, phone number, home address, email, name of school) or photo is something they would give a stranger. If the answer is no, don't post it.

If your child is sharing photos or posts online ask your child to let you see what they are sharing or ask an older sibling to check any photos before they're shared.

6. Keep control of your family's digital footprint

Every picture and personal detail that is posted and shared on social media and the internet contributes to someone's digital footprint. The big risk with this is that once information is shared publicly, it can be used in ways you may not expect and cannot control.

Teach your child to stay in control of their digital footprint, by only sharing with people who they know and trust. Rather than posting to all their friends on social media, encourage them to be selective and use the privacy settings on the social media platforms they use.

7. Teach your children to keep their location private

Most apps, networks and devices have geo-tagging features which make your whereabouts public and can lead someone directly to you. These features should be turned off for obvious privacy and safety reasons.

8. Keep track of online time

The <u>Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines</u> recommend children between the age of five and 17 should have no more than two hours of screen time a day. So, it's important to monitor your child's online time, particularly younger children, to ensure they do not develop bad habits. Get your children to agree on a period of time, say 30 minutes per session, and set a timer to go off – don't forget to make this a non-negotiable finish time. You should also switch off the home Wi-Fi at a set time each night (ideally before bedtime) so everyone has some 'time-out' from the internet. You can also try making some days 'screen-free' in your home to encourage everyone to pursue other more active and/or less technology-driven ways to entertain themselves.

9. Be #SocialNetworkSavvy

Educate yourself on ways to be safe on social networks so that you can give the best advice to your children. Sign up to the social networks and apps your children are using and find out how to use the privacy settings and reporting mechanisms. Talk about how they can stay safe on social networks, including

talking to a trusted person when they are worried, and being aware of what constitutes online bullying – both as a perpetrator and a victim.

If your child uses social networks, be sure they know how to:

- Report inappropriate and/or offensive posts
- Block someone
- Keep information private.

10. Lead by example

Lead by example and always model the kind of positive online behaviour you would like your children to use. If they see you being cautious and respectable when you are online, they are more likely to follow in your footsteps. And, yes, this includes limiting your own screen time.

Ultimately, you don't want to instil fear in your child or prevent them from experiencing the many educational, entertainment, social and other benefits of the internet, but rather give them the skills and knowledge they need to know how to make the most of it and avoid the dangers.