



Redbourn Primary School

Online Safety Parent Information 2023-24

The internet is a fantastic tool, one that is being used by many young children for games, research and homework and, in some cases, accessing social networking sites. Whilst they are confident with the technology, children are not always able to make the right decisions about what they access, who they talk to and what they might post about themselves and others on the internet.

This leaflet will explore the basics when it comes to keeping your child safe and aware when using the internet.

Mobile Phones

More and more primary school children own a mobile phone. The devices themselves are becoming ever more powerful and complex – it is a mini computer in their hands. It is therefore surprisingly easy for children to:

- Access inappropriate websites.
- Take images and videos which can easily be shared.
- Join or be added to group chats or have private conversations.
- Unknowingly share their location (GPS can locate the phone – this can sometimes be shared or published on apps or social media sites).
- Download apps at a cost or make 'in app purchases', sometimes without realising there is a charge.
- Play games which allow random players to chat to each other.

How can I help my child use their mobile phone safely?

Parental settings – some mobile phone service providers allow you to set certain controls over your child's phone. This can include blocking certain sites or being able to 'mirror' their phone so you can see exactly what they are doing. EE have created the Phone Smart License, a free course that prepares children for their new phone world by teaching them how to stay safe and be kind online (you don't need to be with EE to do this). Here are some useful links to get you started:

<http://www.o2.co.uk/parents>

<https://eephonesmart.co.uk/>

<https://www.giffgaff.com/blog/internet-safety-parental-controls/>

Set boundaries – Your child still needs to feel like they have some freedom with their phone, but by setting clear boundaries and having open communication, you can monitor what your child is up to on their phone. We recommend keeping their phone out of their bedrooms at night time.

Loopholes – Even if you have set parent controls, there are ways your child can get around them, for example they could select a different WiFi network. There are also apps (e.g. Calculator+) which can contain unsuitable content, but are disguised to look like normal applications.

Social Media

Most social media sites require children to be above primary school age to sign up. The current age requirements for some popular sites are:

- TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat – 13 years minimum age
- Whatsapp – 16 years minimum age

However, a number of these apps have provided a younger version which either restricts children's usage or provides parents with further controls.

Everyone who uses the internet must be aware that everything they post could be there forever. Even if it is later deleted, images, videos or comments can be copied, saved or tracked down. This is why children must be conscious about everything they put online. This also includes what they might share in a private or group chat.

Online Gaming

The internet has changed the way that young people play games. Games can be played against anyone in the world, at any time and for as long as you want. It is therefore important that you're involved in your child's experiences. Here are some simple ways to help your child game safely:

- Check the age rating of the game. The organisation 'PEGI' set age ratings for games and classify their content according to what is appropriate for different age groups.
- Talk to them about the games they play.
- Get involved – Ask them what they are doing, what they like about the game, how it works. Maybe even play with them!
- Check who they are friends with, in the game - It is important to stay up-to-date and regularly ask your children about the games they play and the people they are friends with.

Know what to do if something goes wrong

Things can go wrong when gaming, whether it's someone being mean, inappropriate or asking them to do something they're not comfortable with.

It's important that you and your child know what steps you can take in the game to block and report people and how to seek support from other services.

Communication is key

It is vital that, as a parent/carer, you maintain a level of trust with your child when accessing the internet. Keep everything open and honest, be transparent, set clear boundaries on how the internet must be used, and assure your child that they can always come to you if they have a problem or are uncomfortable about something they might have seen or heard online.

Useful Websites:

Here are a range of useful websites that provide lots of information for parents and children:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

nationalonlinesafety.com/guides

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>

www.digizen.org/parents/

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carer-toolkit

www.getsafeonline.org

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk/parents/