Online Safety

FORESTERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Online safety

Computers and the internet are now a part of everyday life in our modern society. Many children use computers and mobile devices to play games, learn and explore, as well as the significant role this can play in delivering their learning in school – never more so than during times of home learning.

Whilst the internet can be a great resource and tool for education, fun, communication, and curiosity, it is important to be aware that online activity also contains potential risks such as inappropriate or harmful content, sharing/exposure of personal information and online bullying.

Understanding and discussing with your child what they are doing online is an important role for parents and carers to play. We believe that it is not only important to teach children about online safety at school, but also to support good online practices at home This guide is intended to help you with this. Working together, we aspire to teach our children how to be safe and responsible digital citizens, who make sensible and informed decisions about their actions online.

8 steps to keep your child safe online [from thinkuknow.co.uk]

1. Explore together:
Ask your child to show you their favourite websites and apps and what they do on them. Listen, show interest and encourage them to teach you the basics of the site or app.

2. Chat little and often about online safety:
If you're introducing them to new learning websites and apps while school is closed, take the opportunity to talk to them about how to stay safe on these services and in general. Ask if anything ever worries them while they're online. Make sure they know that if they ever feel worried, they can get help by talking to you or another adult they trust.

3. Help your child identify trusted adults who can help them if they are worried:
This includes you and other adults at home, as well as adults from wider family, school, or other support services who they are able to contact at this time. Encourage them to draw a picture or write a list of their trusted adults.

4. Be non-judgemental:
Explain that you would never blame them for anything that might happen online, and you will always give them calm, loving support.

5. Supervise their online activity:
Keep the devices your child uses in communal areas of the house such as in the living room or kitchen where an adult is able to supervise. Children of this age should not access the internet unsupervised in private spaces, such as alone in a bedroom or bathroom.

6. Talk about how their online actions affect others:
If your child is engaging with others online, remind them to consider how someone else might feel before they post or share something. If they are considering sharing a photo/video of somebody else, they should always ask permission first.

7. Use 'SafeSearch':
Most web search engines will have a 'SafeSearch' function, which will allow you to limit the content your child can access whilst online. Look out for the 'Settings' button on your web browser homepage, which is often shaped like a small cog.

8. Parental controls:
Use the parental controls available on your home broadband and all internet enabled devices in your home. You can find out more about how to use parental controls by visiting your broadband provider's website.

Download the SMART Rules poster here:

- SMART-rules-poster.pdf

Parental controls

Controlling the settings on your child's device can be a useful tool as part of your strategy to keep them safe.

Methods for doing this can vary from device to device. However, if you visit this website, you will find pull-down menus for you to select the particular device being used, and in each case a step-by-step guide to applying parental controls is provided, with pictures/screenshots and simple instructions to guide you through the process:

- Internet Matters: Parental Controls

An information sheet about setting up new devices for children is supplied here:

- Online safety tips for children with devices.pdf

Social media resources

Most social media resources have a minimum age for users to sign up – which is almost always above the age range of primary school children (13+). However, it is important to be aware of the following:

- No checks are made if children sign up giving false age details claiming to be older, which some children have been known to do.
- Even without setting up a personal user account, many of these resources will still allow anybody to view content created by others – either by installing an app on a device, or by visiting a web page.
- Most of these resources were not originally set up with children in mind (hence the age restrictions for signing up) and so much of the content may be intended for an older audience.

Some of the most commonly used social media resources are as follows:

1. Facebook – has a strict 13+ age restriction, and personal accounts must be set up by any user. Sharing of photos, videos, online chat, and involvement in groups; messages can be received by complete strangers. Strong privacy settings ("Friends only") are available, but not applied by default – you need to set these up.
2. Tik Tok – a video sharing tool which allows sharing and interaction with content posted. Requires 13+ age to sign up, but no account is needed to watch videos, which can be viewed by absolutely anybody.
3. YouTube – another video sharing tool, again with online interaction and creation of a public profile by users. Age requirement to set up an account is 13+ but although some videos are flagged as age restricted, most content can be viewed by anybody – no account needed. A child-friendly version "YouTube Kids" is available for children aged 0-12, with far greater filtering and monitoring of content, and incorporating parental controls on a child account.
4. Instagram – share videos and photos, including by live streaming, and receive comments – including those from strangers. 13+ to sign up, but content can be viewed without an account. There is no e-mail authentication when signing up for an account, so fake/multiple accounts are particularly rife. It is strongly advised to make account settings private and switch off location sharing when using this resource, which is possible but not set by default.
5. Snapchat – a social media tool heavily focused on the younger demographic; in the United States, it is claimed that 69% of all 13–17-year-olds use (or have used) this resource – and that 41% cite it as their most important online social network. Minimum age for registering is 13, and restrictions are tighter for non-members who can only view a video if an account holder sends it to them and are not able to comment or respond to them. It is strongly recommended for users to switch on "Ghost mode" to hide personal details such as their location.
6. Twitter – a resource aimed at (and largely used by) an older demographic, with a 13+ requirement to sign up. All posts are made public rather than shared with a specific group and comments can be posted with complete anonymity or fake profiles. Whilst it is easy to block others online it is equally simple for them to set up new accounts just as quickly. Setting strict privacy settings removes much of the functionality of this resource, which is largely used to communicate and share messages with people that you don't know.

A more comprehensive guide to apps, games and social media sites can be found here:

- Net Aware

Online video calls

Recommendations or restrictions relating to age limits exist with most resources for online video calls, so you are encouraged to take the time to read the terms for each provider that you use. Summary information about the most commonly used resources of this type is provided at the link below:

- **Online video calls**

Further information

Information sheets are provided here to inform and to help you have conversations with your children about specific areas of using social media. Sharing images, playing games online, cyber bullying, livestreaming, and watching videos are included.

- activity-sheet-livestreaming.pdf
- activity-sheet-sharing-images.pdf
- activity-sheet-social-media.pdf
- activity-sheet-viewing-videos-online.pdf
- activity-sheet-cyber-security.pdf
- activity-sheet-gaming.pdf

Useful websites:

- https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents
- https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers
- https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
- https://www.bbc.com/ownit
- https://nationalonlinesafety.com/
- https://www.internetmatters.org/
- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/