Safeguarding Update

St Mary's CE School, Kirkby Lonsdale

This is the second of our safeguarding briefing newsletters which we hope will equip you as parents to further keep your children safe. As a school, we are vividly aware of the power of the internet to support learning and the value of social media to share snapshots of learning that takes place in school. During the pandemic it has obviously been essential to maintain learning as best possible through online provision – in our case through Google Education. Even when in school, the technology available to us has an amazing impact on learning and it is an increasingly important aspect as we prepare our children for their future lives.

One of the challenges we face as educators are issues raised by parents when there are problems that occur with children's access to the internet, typically YouTube, chat spaces and social media. Parents often wrangle with decisions such as when their children should be allowed a phone or how much access children should have to tablets and social media.

We do educate our children about issues relating to chat spaces and internet use. Inevitably there are times when children make mistakes when using chat spaces and the internet. One key way to support children is to monitor what the children watch and do on the internet and also to put safety precautions in place. It is often the parents who monitor their children's internet use, who pick up on issues quickly and enable us to work with the children to help work through any problems. It is important to monitor chat and messages children send to each other. In school, we try to provide a safe platform to allow children the opportunity to learn about chatting online in an appropriate manner and have very thorough monitoring systems in place. We don't routinely check up on what is being said (much like conversations in the playground) but we do have controls which allow us to see everything that has been said, and deleted, by any of our school users.

I am therefore taking this opportunity to challenge parents to check on a daily/weekly basis how much screen time the children have. Is the time they spend healthy? I am also going to seize the moment and say, is what they are watching, doing or saying on the internet appropriate? Importantly, are the children behaving safely or are they becoming vulnerable as a result of there internet use?

We have very good safety measures in place in school to monitor internet searches, chat space use and internet protection on school devices. 95% of all issues that parents often want us to respond to, take place within the home or as a result of accessing websites at home. Hopefully, this safeguarding newsletter will be a prompt to help parents and carers to reflect on the impact of their child's unsupervised internet use at home.

Please do read on or visit our school website for further information and support.

Useful Acronyms & Vocabulary

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

SPOC: Single Point of Contact (PREVENT) - responsible for preventing children being impacted by extremism

Sexual Violence: Incidents such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault

Sexual Harassment: sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
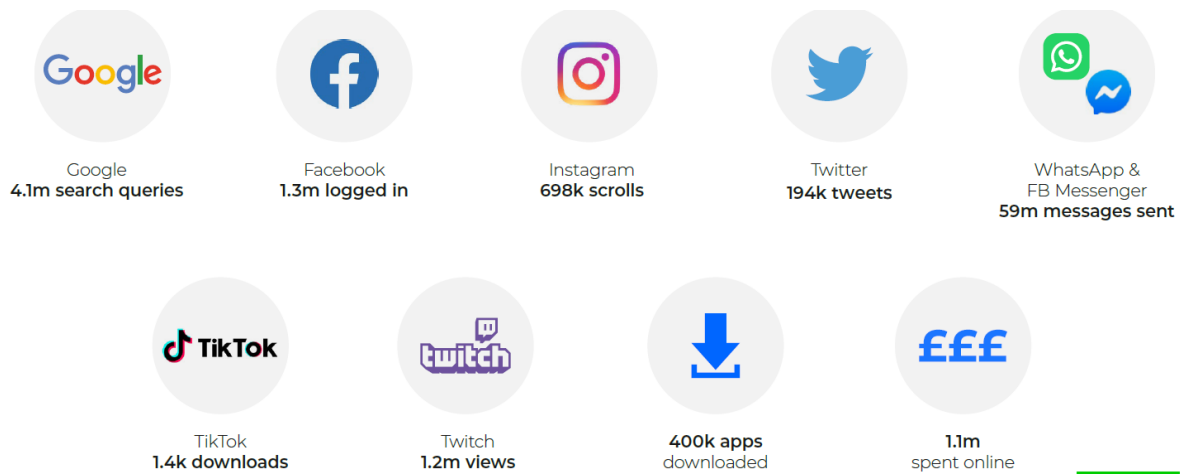
Sexting: also known as 'youth-produced sexual imagery'

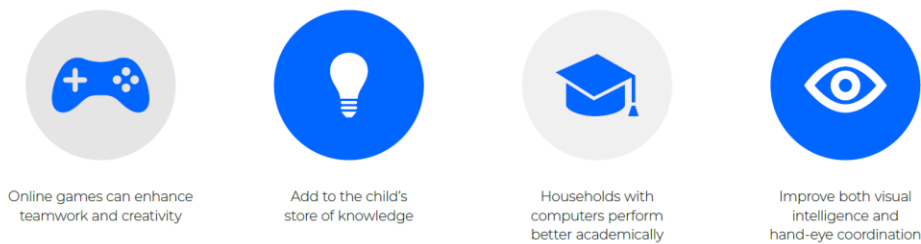**Sexual abuse:** being persuaded or forced into undesired sexual activity

Misogyny: Feelings of hating women or the belief that me are better than women

Did you know…..

Every minute there are:

Google 4.1m search queries	**Facebook** 1.3m logged in	**Instagram** 698k scrolls	**Twitter** 194k tweets	**WhatsApp & FB Messenger** 59m messages sent

TikTok 1.4k downloads	**Twitch** 1.2m views	**400k apps** downloaded	**1.1m** spent online

There are lots of positives…

Online games can enhance teamwork and creativity

Add to the child's store of knowledge

Households with computers perform better academically

Improve both visual intelligence and hand-eye coordination

89% of 8-11 year olds said that using social media made them feel happy and **82%** said it helped them to feel closer to their friends
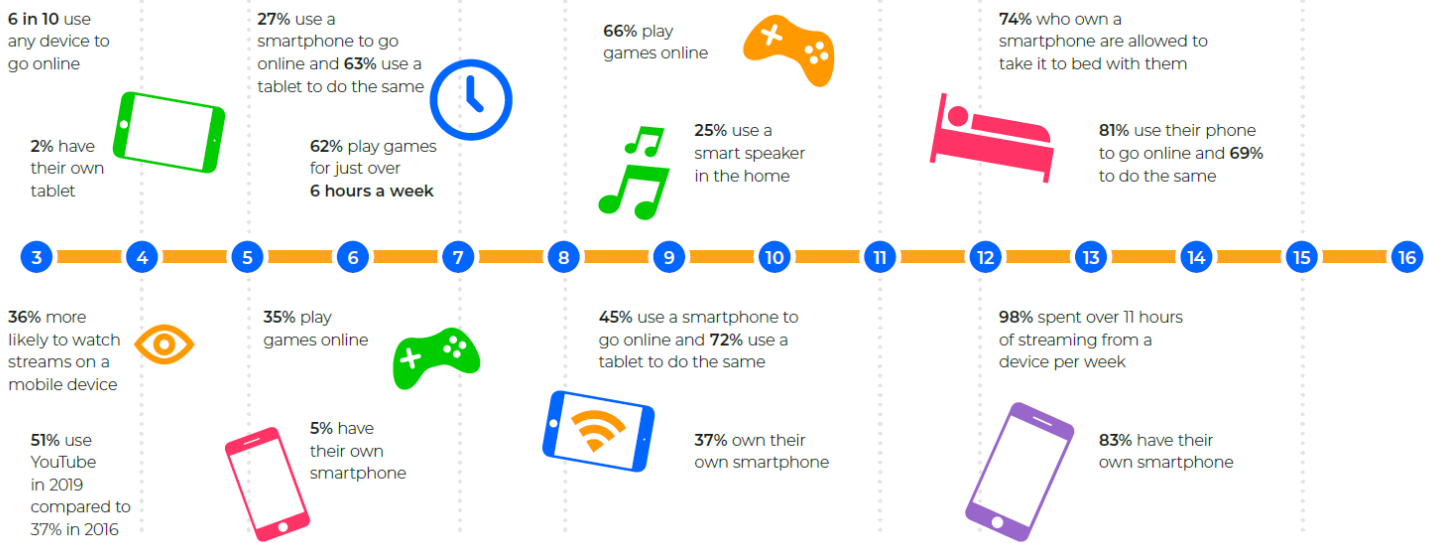2020 Ofcom

internet matters.org

But technology can affect children's development…

- **Sleep cycles** are affected by blue light from screens

- Screen-based entertainment **increases central nervous system arousal**

- Children today are **more forgetful** than OAP's

- One study found that the **more distracted** you are, the less able you are to experience empathy

- Gaming platforms use persuasive design in order to keep people using their product, and **children are particularly vulnerable** to these tactics.

internet matters.org

Media usage by age

6 in 10 use any device to go online

2% have their own tablet

27% use a smartphone to go online and 63% use a tablet to do the same

62% play games for just over 6 hours a week

66% play games online

25% use a smart speaker in the home

74% who own a smartphone are allowed to take it to bed with them

81% use their phone to go online and 69% to do the same

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

36% more likely to watch streams on a mobile device

51% use YouTube in 2019 compared to 37% in 2016

35% play games online

5% have their own smartphone

45% use a smartphone to go online and 72% use a tablet to do the same

37% own their own smartphone

98% spent over 11 hours of streaming from a device per week

83% have their own smartphone

And there are risks...

High-Risk Online Scenarios					
Risks	Contact	Content	Conduct	Cyber scams	Overall risk – all 4Cs' together
Vulnerabilities					
Special Educational Needs	Predicts contact risks. Includes sexting under pressure, coercion, blackmail, or threats to send more images				Significantly higher score for basket of all high-risk online scenarios
Communication			Predicts conduct risks. More likely to visit gambling sites and chat rooms	May struggle to understand T&Cs - can leave them more susceptible to scams	Significantly vulnerable to the basket of all high-risk online scenarios
Family / Social (care-experienced)		Higher exposure to harmful content		Particularly susceptible to cyber scams. This can link to being a victim of online aggression.	High overall risk for the basket of all high-risk online scenarios
Mental health difficulties					Significantly high risk for the basket of all high-risk online scenarios
Physical disabilities			Predicts conduct risks. More likely to visit sites with adult content.		Significantly more likely to experience a basket of all high-risk online scenarios

Dealing with inappropriate CONTENT

4.7 million

URL's showing pornographic content – **more than 12%** of the internet

11 years

Average age to **first view porn online**

1/3

of children have **seen explicit images** by age of 10

Controlling tech time

Your children will be watching the way you use technology and they will copy; make sure there is some consistency in how you **role model** good behaviour:

1 Turn off notifications on apps to avoid that constant 'ping'

2 Buy an alarm clock so you don't have devices in the bedrooms

3 Keep phone on silent in your pocket or bag when you pick the kids from school

4 'No phones at the table' rule or 'no phones between 6 and 7' rule

5 Family tech-free days!

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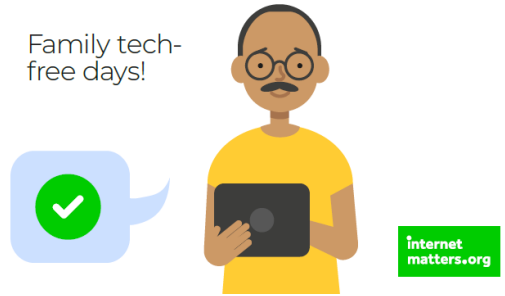
Controlling tech time

And there are tactics you can put in place **to help manage** their screen time....

1 Set a good example

2 Talk together about the time spent online

3 Agree on appropriate length of time they can use their device

4 Get the whole family to unplug & create screen-free zones

5 Use technology/apps to help manage screen time e.g. Forest App

internet matters.org

https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/expert-opinion/need-help-managing-kids-screen-time-the-forest-app-can-help/

GIVE IT a go!

Why not download the Forest App?

As educators, we witness the positiv e impact of technology and the internet on learning. We also responding to the various negative impacts of high levels of screen use.

Communication and ability to pay attention.

Communication is a key part of learning in nursery and within a primary school; children spend time speaking and listening to each other, sharing stories, singing songs and learning how to follow instructions. The majority of nurseries and schools (75%) have stated that for older preschool children and also primary school children there is a chance that they will have developed a slight American accent from more time watching YouTube videos and TV shows during lockdown.

In the current era, the use of electronic media in the form of Internet has increased exponentially, particularly among children, and has led to their excessive involvement in Internet. Sometimes, the children are ill-equipped to deal with the avalanche of information, dialogue and stimulation that they can be bombarded with every minute they are online. In this context, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) children are found to have increased tendency for developing an addiction to this stimulus. It is also suggested that unfocused use of the internet can have an impact on the concertation levels of pupils. As a simple example, when watching videos of their favourite social media stars, they are being exposed to an unnatural way of communication and one which humans are not designed to cope with for any lengthy period of time. All of the natural breaks that occur in conversation and speech have been edited out of these videos which results in a non-stop barrage of audio stimulus. Obviously, not all videos are like this and content online is simply fantastic for learning all about the world we live in, but it is another aspect we need to be aware of and links back to the necessity of monitoring what our children are spending their time doing online.

Grooming

You will be aware also of the issues around grooming and the possible risks when using the internet.

You may want to watch this short video to remind yourself of the issues around grooming and how you can protect your child.

https://youtu.be/WusIPf1viis

Obviously, technology providers have a responsibility for some of this support and monitoring and both Apple and Android devices have very simple to use apps and pages to link with your children's accounts to control any or all aspects you feel necessary. For example, the **Google Family Link app** allows you to set limits for daily/weekly screen time; sets up a time for when you can no longer use the app (usually set for at least half an hour before bed time to allow children's eyes and minds unwind ready for sleep); control which apps they are allowed to use and gives you a list of the videos they are watching online. Once you have set it up, it really is effortless to keep an eye on what is happening and to keep use of the internet healthy.

We want to promote the purposeful and positive use of technology and use of the internet to support learning and positive well-being.

We also want to keep our children safe whilst using the internet.

- ✓ Please encourage children to actively take part our paid for learning apps and provision eg:
  - o Doodle Maths – for all round maths support– make sure the children know their passwords!
  - o T T Rockstars – for times tables practice.

- ✓ Consider good 'phone use' apps eg Forest App
- ✓ Discuss and check phone and any internet use each week – be honest with your child that this will take place
- ✓ Monitor chatrooms/messaging apps your children are using each week – find out what they are saying!
- ✓ Be honest and open about what appropriate language to use in chat spaces
- ✓ Limit arbitrary/passive use of the internet eg Youtube
- ✓ Try to positively focus/steer what is accessed on screens

Back up what is taught in school – Safer Internet day is next week, Tuesday 8th of February, and all children will be doing activities based on this.

stay safe online
Remember the 5 SMART rules when using the internet and mobile phones.

S **SAFE:** Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information – such as your full name, email address, phone number, home address, photos or school name – to people you are chatting with online.

m **MEET:** Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present.

a **ACCEPTING:** Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

r **RELIABLE:** Information you find on the internet may not be true, or someone online may be lying about who they are. Make sure you check information before you believe it.

t **TELL:** Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.

Safer Internet Day 2022 | Tuesday 8 February

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre