Safeguarding Newsletter for Parents

Issue 2- Monday 5th June 2023

Every half term I will write a Safeguarding Newsletter with useful ideas and ways to keep your children safe when they are online.

Children at Catherington learn that to be safe online that must:

- Never reveal personal information, either their own or others, such as home addresses, telephone numbers and personal e-mail addresses etc.
- Not to use photographs of themselves on their web pages unless the parent/guardians have given permission to do so.
- Not to chat to people online who they don't know in real life.
- Tell a trusted adult whenever they come across information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate, or make them feel uncomfortable.
- Be aware that the author of an e-mail or web page may not be the person they claim to be.

What are the risks of online gaming?

Being Bullied- Children can be bullied for not playing a specific game. They may be deliberately excluded from a game by their friends, or criticised for how they play. Other players may swear or use abusive language over voice chat, and this can be upsetting for your child.

Trolling, griefing and scams- Griefers are gamers who deliberately try to ruin the game for other players. This can also be called trolling. Players may also try to trick or scam young people into giving up 'skins' or other in-game items by offering them money or by hacking their account.

In game purchases- Some games cost money to download, or players need to buy credits or items so they can keep playing. Many free games are designed to make the player want to continue but need payments to make this possible, which can be very frustrating.

Talking to people they don't know- Young people can easily play with people they don't know and haven't met, communicating using voice, video or text chat. This puts young people at risk of grooming or online forms of abuse.

Tips for keeping your child safe online when gaming

- Show your child the blocking and reporting functions so they can prevent people from contacting them.
- Do not store payment card details on devices or in apps to prevent charges building up.

- Check the games content
- Some games let players turn off communications features, mute voice chat and report other players who behave inappropriately. Look at the settings available to see what's best for your child.
- All major games consoles have settings that prevent children from finding inappropriate games. You can set limits on how long a young person can play and prevent them from speaking to unknown players. It's a good idea to explore these settings before your child plays the game.
- Make a family agreement- Advice for a family agreement can be found here:
  https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/online-safety/online-safety---downloadable-resources/cso_familyagreement_interactive_jan2022.pdf

Online safety family agreement

An online safety family agreement can be used to start a conversation about online safety, agree expectations and boundaries and help to keep your kids safe online.

What to think about and questions to ask

- What are the **different things you each go online for?** It could be research for school work, keeping in touch with friends, or gaming.
- What are the **favourite apps or sites** each person uses?
- How does each family member **access the internet** – via a phone, tablet, or something different?
- Are there things that any of you are doing online that are worrying or **affecting others?** Think about time spent online, is it interfering with family life such as meal times?
- **How do you talk** about online safety with your child – is it negative or positive?
- How many **devices in your house** are connected to the internet? Can you go on a hunt to count them and see if you each come up with the same amount!

Basics

- **Sharing** – what is being shared and with who? Think about what pictures and videos show, and what is being included in messages.
- **Content** – are the games, apps and chat sites suitable for the person using them? You should remember that what is suitable for one person in the household might not be suitable for another.
- **Chat** – what should your child do if someone they don't know messages them? Who are they talking to online and are they sure they are who they say they are?
- **Behaviour** – does anything your child does online affect behaviour? This could be getting angry if they lose a game, or feeling anxious that they've missed a post.
- **Settings** – do you have safety settings in place on broadband and wifi and on your child's devices like phones or games consoles, such as for location sharing and parental controls?

Behaviour

- There may be different agreements for different members of the household, this might be based on age, but also on ability to understand the risks and being able to deal with challenges.
- The agreement might be broken at some point, that isn't a failure, but use it as a time to talk about what has happened and why and what you can do to help keep to the agreement in future.
- You'll need to review the agreement over time. Agree how long it should be before the next review.
- Think about how you are talking about online behaviour – promote positive behaviour rather than focusing on negatives.

Remember

Once you've talked together about how your family use the internet you can use this agreement to note down what you each agree too.

Make sure your agreement works for each member of the family and you all understand that online behaviour may need to change to stick to the agreement.

NSPCC

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR