Safeguarding Newsletter for Parents

Issue 4- December 2024

This newsletter provides 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.

As a parent or carer you play a key role in helping your child to stay safe online. You don't need to be an expert on the internet to help keep your child stay safe online. The following advice and resources are there to support you as you support your child to use the internet safely, responsibility and positively.

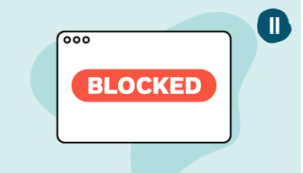<p align="center">**This issue focuses on children's Wellbeing when online.**</p>

There are lots of positives for children being online, however there can be negatives too. For some it can become overwhelming trying to keep up with friends, and the pressure can mount.

Many things can impact our online wellbeing, and you can take control of the choices made to reduce any negativity. Being aware of the impact of being online, just like you would be aware of the impact of offline activities, is the first step to managing your children's online wellbeing.

Screen time and healthy balance

It is likely that children may engage with technology and the internet for extended periods of time every day/ week. This extended use of the internet has been reported to leave young people more likely to worry about how long they are spending online and what they have seen. It has also been linked to a sense of loneliness. When it comes to using technology and the internet it all comes down to quality and not quantity, meaning that we should focus on making our use purposeful, and strike a healthy balance between online and offline experiences.

Six tips to improve your family's online wellbeing

1. Screen-time savvy

Spending less time on screens is a great way to improve wellbeing both online and offline.

Try setting some limits and boundaries surrounding screens and make use of the wellbeing settings on apps such as Instagram and TikTok, or on your devices.

2. Navigate the negative

Children can see things online that make them feel upset, angry, or cause low self-esteem. If this happens, encourage them to mute or block accounts that do this.

They can also use settings that block words, phrases, or posts they don't want to see. Encourage them to make their online space a positive one!

3. Seeing isn't believing

Remind your child that not everything they see or hear online is true. Encourage them to regularly question what they're viewing. This includes content that might be making them feel bad about themselves, or like they're missing out. If this does happen, you could talk to your child about filters, edited images or the fact that people usually post about the best bits of their lives rather than the boring, everyday bits.

4. Mistakes happen

If your child makes a mistake online, such as getting into an argument or sharing personal information, be understanding. You could use this mistake as a learning opportunity!

This is a part of building digital resilience, which will help you all feel better about being online.

5. Take the lead

Your children look to you as an example. Make sure you're acting on your own online wellbeing advice – doing things like taking breaks and not engaging with negative content.

6. Get chatting

Have regular chats with your child about what they like doing online and how it makes them feel.

Don't forget to talk about the positives of being online as much as the negatives, and really listen to what they're telling you.

Lots of devices and platforms offer tools to support digital wellbeing. You may also be able to turn off notifications for apps or use 'mute' or 'do not disturb' modes.
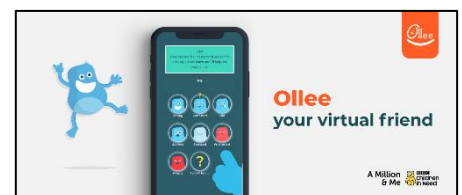
Wellbeing conversation starters

What things make you happy when you use technology?

What things worry you/ make you unhappy/angry/sad when using technology?

What would you do if something online upset you?

How do you think your use of technology impacts your wellbeing? Good or bad?

A resource for your children and their older siblings

Ollee is a digital friend for ages 8-11 – created by Parent Zone and funded by BBC Children in Need.

It helps children explore feelings around school, family, friends, the world and much, much more.

Ollee asks how you're feeling and offers ideas about what to do. If you're not sure, Ollee will help you figure it out.

Children and parents can both create and connect Ollee accounts – to share advice together.

Try Ollee in a web browser or download the app to your device.