

Knowsley Central School

Online Safety Newsletter: June 2016

This is the first of our termly Online Safety Newsletters and will hopefully offer you some guidance on how to support your children with their online lives and help keep them safe.

Social Networking

The social networking revolution seems to show no signs of slowing down with children increasingly using the different social networking apps/ platforms available to them. Generally speaking the minimum age for having a social networking account is 13 but we know that children under this age are accessing these sites/apps. To help you here's some more information about three of the more popular social networking apps that your children maybe using:



Whatsapp

'If you are under 16 years of age, you are not permitted to use the WhatsApp Service' (WhatsApp Terms and Conditions, 2016).

Whatsapp is a free messenger app that allows users to send messages, images, video and audio using the internet and is popular amongst children. The app allows you to create groups of friends and then messages, photo's, videos posted are shared amongst the group. One of the concerns we have with Whatsapp is that anyone with your mobile number can contact you via Whatsapp, you do not have to have their details. A further concern is the mis-use of the app to bully children. We have seen cases where groups can be set up to target individual children causing them particular upset and distress.



Snapchat (age limit: 13)

Snapchat is a messenger app that allows you to send photos, videos, text and drawings. The unique feature of Snapchat is that the message only stays on the recipient's phone for a matter of seconds. Or at least that is what's supposed to happen but children have worked out that by taking a screen shot while the image is available to them they have a picture of the message in their camera roll. This has caused issues for children who have sent pictures (sometimes of a sexual nature) to someone thinking they will only be viewable for a few seconds only to find out they have been copied and at times shared.

Parental tip – as part of the default setup of Snapchat anyone with your phone number can contact you via Snapchat, whether you have their number or not. This can be changed so that only 'your friends' can contact you. To do this go into settings, scroll down to 'Who can' and tap 'Contact Me' and change 'Send me Snaps' from 'Everyone' to 'My Friends'.



Instagram (age limit: 13)

Instagram is a social networking site that enables users to share photos and videos. It is owned by Facebook. Users are able to upload photos or videos from their mobile devices via an app and these can then be viewed either publically or privately depending on what the users has their profile set to.

28% of 8-11 year olds believe everything they read on the internet is true (2015, Ofcom)

Taking Control

29% of 5-7 years olds own their own Tablet computer (2015 Ofcom)

Family Safety

This is a free service offered by Microsoft to help protect children and it is available for any Windows device. Family Safety provides a website and free program that you can install on the PCs your children use, so that you can give them some independence but still keep tabs on their online activity. Family Safety can also help keep your children off websites that you don't want them looking at and only let them talk to people you're okay with them talking too. For further information see the website below:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows/set-up-family#set-up-family=windows-7&set-up-familysafety=windows-7>

Parental Control on an iPad/ iPhone

One of the features that is overlooked by parents but is a useful tool to help protect your children is 'Restrictions'. By activating 'Restrictions' you can limit features on any Apple devices including in-app purchases, Facetime, Safari & Siri. You can also set age restrictions for the type of content your children are accessing. To do this on an iPad/ iPhone go to 'Settings' > 'General' scroll down and tap 'Restrictions'. Select 'Enable Restrictions', put a restrictions passcode in (this is used to change or delete the restrictions on the device) and then select the restrictions you want to put on the device.

Help is at hand

Childline and O2 have teamed up to offer a free helpline for parents. The helpline has been put in place to provide advice or to answer queries about a range of things including online gaming or parental controls. The free phone number is **0808 800 5002**.

YouTube Kids

YouTube have a version of their app that is child friendly making it perfect for younger children. It is free from both Android and App Stores and includes lots of popular videos. The app will give you peace of mind that your younger children can access videos without the risk of seeing something inappropriate.



52% of 8-11 year olds play online games (2015, Ofcom)

Online Gaming

From speaking to parents, it is clear that a number of you have concerns about the games your children are playing online and who they are playing them with. Games have changed significantly over the past ten years and put simply they are very realistic, particularly in terms of violence. While gaming online users can communicate with each other through a chat facility and

the language used is often not appropriate for children.

All games come with an age rating and you should check the age rating of the games your children are playing. Ask your children to show you the games they are playing to enable you to make a decision as to whether the games are appropriate for them. When children are playing on games consoles in their bedrooms, make sure they leave the bedroom door open so you can hear the conversations they are having online.

