Online safety – building 'digital resilience'

The internet is like a magician's hat. It's full of exciting things to discover and children love it. But while they seem to know what they are doing, sometimes their parents don't and that can be a worry. Following our briefing from PC Evans regarding Internet Safety today we have put together some information we think you as parents should be aware of. The NSPCC has a lot of information that will help you with this. Just visit nspcc.org.uk/online safety.

Online safety – what are the risks for our children?

- Inappropriate content, including pornography
- Ignoring age restrictions
- Friending/communicating with people they don't know
- Grooming and sexual abuse
- Sharing personal information
- Gambling/running up debts
- Gaming

Remember 'TEAM'

Talk to your child about their online world, just like you do about their day at school.

Explore and understand the apps, games and sites your child uses and get to know this better. (NetAware is a great free online app for this)

Agree the family rules to live well online. Discuss and agree ground rules and make sure you are a good role model.

Manage settings and controls – then monitor them

Talk about how your child can stay safe on social networks

Do they know:

Where reporting functions are? How to block someone ? How to keep information private?

Show them how to do these things. Use Net Aware to help you.

Talk about online privacy, and being Share Aware. Explain that online behaviour – including sharing personal information – should be the same as how you would behave face to face.

Explain that talking to strangers isn't always 'bad', but they should always be careful about what they share and sometimes people aren't who they say they are.

Ask about things they might see online which make them feel uncomfortable

Talk about things they, or their friends, have seen that made them feel uncomfortable:

Be specific. What exactly made them feel uncomfortable and why? Is it people or animals being hurt? Nasty comments about others?

Link these to things in the real world, and explain that you're always here to protect and help them online and off.

Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Show them how to report or block on the sites and apps they use. Use Net Aware to find out how.

Tell them you'll help them to report anything upsetting they've seen, or to deal with online bullying.

Reassure them that you won't overreact – you're just looking out for them

Explain that you understand the internet is a great place to be and that you're just looking out for them. Tell them they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them.

Reassure them that you're interested in all aspects of their life. Say that you'd like to talk about stuff they've seen online, sites and apps they visit, and that you'll share the things you've seen too. Recognise that they'll be using the internet to research homework, for example.

Things to think about:

Group situations often mean children are less careful.

The internet should have a bed-time. Switch it off to avoid children using it when you think they've gone to bed.
Think about having a box that they are kept in downstairs at night- the 'drop zone'!