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Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to welcome you to this **Online Safety** newsletter. As Computing Subject Leader, I will be striving to bring you regular newsletters to help support your child in being a digital learner, whilst remaining safe. I recently completed a CEOP (child exploitation online protection) ambassador course, which has enabled me to receive all the latest updates regarding issues emerging around online safety for our school community. I will be providing training in school, to all members of staff, as well as keeping this strand of the curriculum up to date for our pupils. I am also very keen to work with you, as the children's parents and carers, to establish links between home and school so that we can offer the very best guidance for our children in this ever-changing digital world.

'Today's children are growing up online and make little distinction between life online and off. Their use of online games, apps and services plays a crucial role in the development of their identities, friendships, relationships and aspirations. It is essential that we, as educators, parents and carers, respond by offering them high-quality education and guidance.'
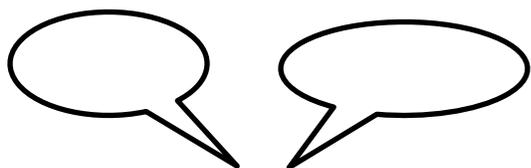
Head of Education, CEOP

What do we do in school?

All year groups complete online safety lessons as part of the Computing curriculum. The children receive weekly Computing lessons and online safety is continually referred to throughout the course of the school year. We use a variety of resources to teach the children about how to protect themselves, and these are always pitched at an age-appropriate level. Some of the resources we use in school also have useful parent/carer sections, for example:

Topic of the month: **chatting online.**

There are a huge number of apps available that enable children to talk to other people – be that friends or strangers. Many of these apps have age ratings but it is very easy for children to get around this. Below are some of the more common social media sites/apps and their age restrictions:

Whilst adhering to age restrictions is very important, it is also worth noting that many children will disregard this and you need to create open lines of communication; where they don't fear informing you about any problems they may encounter.

Gaming – most online games that children play have a chat facility. This means that, despite being aimed at children, they still fall under the category of social media. So while parents/carers may be restricting access to other known chat sites, children are often allowed free reign of these sites, such as the ones below:

Take care:

- Never share personal information online, such as: surname, address or school.
- Someone may be a 'friend' online but in reality we actually have no idea who that person is.
- Adults use gaming sites.
- In cases where gaming sites have been abused, adults have persuaded children to enter into private chats, usually on another site, under the guise of giving the child 'tips' or 'cheats' for a specific game they are playing. Children are particularly susceptible to this type of bribery.
- Have open discussions with your child about their behaviour online – get them to tell you what sites they use, games they are playing or any concerns they have.
- Beware of children spending long periods of time online in separate rooms from you.

Date for your diary: Tuesday 28th November coffee morning featuring online safety chat.

Mary Rebelo, a Computing consultant, will be attending the parents' coffee morning to provide further information for how to keep your child safe online. Please join us for excellent, up-to-date advice on the biggest issues currently faced by our children.

Should you have any concerns regarding online safety then please don't hesitate to voice these to us. I will always be happy to work with parents/carers and ensure that we offer the very best guidance and support for our children.

Best wishes,

Sarah Francis
(Computing Subject Leader)