Parents Online Safety Newsletter

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Safer Internet Day 2017

This year's Safer Internet Day 2017 is on Tue 7th Feb. More information can be accessed at http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2017. The theme ***is Be the change: unite for a better internet***. Find out what your child's school is doing for Safer Internet Day

Sexting: changes to schools and police guidance

The government has recently updated the guidance for both schools and police in dealing with incidents of youth-produced sexual imagery (commonly known as sexting), which involve the taking and sharing of sexual images of children, often by other children.

The change to police guidance is that where an incident is reported to the police, they must now create a crime record in relation to it. This is not the same as a criminal record but could under some circumstances be disclosed on an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check in the future. Procedures have been put into place to ensure disclosure will not happen routinely and only where necessary.

Where schools have incidents of sexting reported to them, they will need to decide whether to report this to the police. Where appropriate the incident can be managed by schools, including the deleting of imagery from devices. Parents should be aware that headteachers of schools do have a right to seize and search devices believed to contain harmful content.

The NSPCC have an excellent website explaining how parents can support their children and talk to them about the risks.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/

Talking to children about terrorism

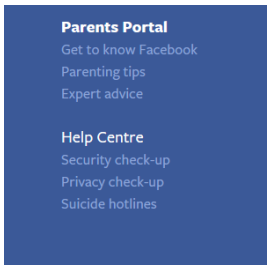
The NSPCC has highlighted children's fears about terrorism, with 660 counselling sessions on the topic having been provided by Childline between November 2015 and November 2016. Tips for talking to children worried about terrorism include: listen and ask them what they know and how they feel about it; reassure them that adults are doing everything they can to keep them safe; avoid complicated explanations that could leave a child confused and frightened.

NSPCC have also produced a video giving tips from other parents available from https://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/news-opinion/increase-calls-childline-paris-attacks/

Facebook guidance updated

Facebook has relaunched its safety centre and bullying prevention hub. It provides information on bullying for teens, parents and educators, including what to do if a child is bullying others. There is also a new parent's portal.

https://www.facebook.com/safety/parents



Parental controls: new guidance from the NSPCC

The NSPCC have recently produced new guidance for parents about how to set parental controls on a variety of devices and apps at https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/

Parental controls can be used to block upsetting or harmful content, control in-app purchases or manage how long your child spends online. They are available on your broad band or mobile phone data signal; individual devices such as tablets, phones, games consoles, SMART TVs as well as search engines and other apps or websites, for example YouTube, Snapchat or Musical.ly.

However, parents and carers need to be aware that they are only part of the strategy to keep your children safe and make be less effective for older or particularly tech-savvy children. Controls will not block a lot of user-generated content such as images and videos shared via group chat or sent on messaging services.

Musical.ly

Musical.ly is an app that allows users (or Musers as they are known) to post 15-second videos of themselves lip syncing and dancing to music or other audio tracks and interacting with other Musers. Some of the songs contain sexual lyrics or swearing which may not be appropriate for younger children and there does not currently seem to be a way to switch this off. Some of the dance moves that the children are doing on camera can be inappropriate for this age group. There is also a MyCity feature that gives you a feed from local Musers. You are also encouraged to share videos via your other social media. You have a choice to post videos publically or privately, but if you go onto the app you can see quite young children posting public videos of themselves; the app also allows users to duet and to livestream.

Musical.ly has over 80 million users, most of them teens. Users are often looking for hearts which are similar to Facebook Likes. Those Musers at the top of the leaderboard have millions of fans and get correspondingly millions of hearts. We have had a few enquiries about the safety of this app. It is generally quite fun but we would not recommend young children posting videos publically. Musers also risk getting friendship requests from people they don't know, which can be inappropriate and they can be put under pressure to accept requests or speak to people they don't know.

This app may be of particular interest to children who love performing. If you want to look at the other

features then have a look at this step-by-step article

http://www.techinsider.io/how-to-use-musically-2016-6/#when-you-open-the-musically-app-it-defaults-to-a-feed-of-featured-videos-1

Need to translate your child's codes?

If you need to translate acronyms on your child's phone or other device try the below website http://www.netlingo.com/top50/acronyms-for-parents.php