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Year 6 –Safety Workshops

Why do children not talk to their parents about their online activity? Research tells us that children do not talk to their parents because they worry that the response will be to stop them using their phone or tablet.

Being a good parent when it comes to social media and online gaming is challenging. Do we know what our children are doing? And do we have the expertise to guide them?

On December 2nd and 3rd Year 6 had two workshops on e-safety. Session 1 had three activities –

- a. gathering information on the children's usage;
- b. children in groups then completed a risk benefit analysis of their various phone and tablet activities;
- c. questions were written in secret and submitted ready for the discussion in session 2.

Session 2 shared the information gathered and then explored issues of safe usage.

This is the fourth year of running these workshops. It is interesting to see how the results have changed over this period – and the questions have had to be changed to keep up with changes in technology and applications and children's usage.

What is clear is that phones and tablets and gaming platforms are an increasingly important part of children's lives.

Do they know how to act responsibly? Do they know what to do if they are worried about something? And will they take appropriate action? Are they involved in risky behaviours?

Have a look at the answers yourself, found in the other document sent with this one [Year 6 E-safety 19 12]. What do you think?



When the children looked at the data in the second session further information came to light. This year 6 group are very busy users of social media, and many are administrators. Boys spend a lot of time gaming, many admitted that they played games with an 18 rating. Quite a number upload their own material via blogs and films.

You will see that quite a large number have reported their concerns. Is this worrying or reassuring? Probably a mixture of both. In previous years parents have brought incidents of cyber-bullying and/or worrying behaviour to our attention. So far, there have been no such incidents disclosed.

So what questions did the children ask? What did concern them? What did they want to know? Well, here is a list of their main questions.

Is it scientifically proven technology is bad for you?

Why is it not illegal to play an 18 if you are underage?

What would you do if someone keeps texting you?

Am I in danger if my name is my username?

How can I change the way that I talk when I text so that I do not hurt people's feelings?

What should I do if I am being bullied by an older person?

Is it bad to report someone?

What do you do if you are challenged by someone you don't know to play 1:1 when you are gaming?

How do you block people online?

Why do people do such horrible things over the internet?

If you get hacked what should you do?

Exploring these questions together was revealing. Have this conversation with your children.

The children are sophisticated users but they are still children. Knowing what the right thing to do is not the same as doing the right thing. We gave advice to the children about what they should do to be responsible and safe users which included the unpopular advice to not have their phones or tablets in their bedrooms when they go to sleep.

The analogy of riding a bike on a road was used repeatedly and the children understood the significance. As parents we would never dream of giving a child a bike and letting them cycle on the roads without knowing that they can ride it, know the rules of the road, where the brakes are and how to use them.....

The children were told that we would advise parents not to take their technology away from them if they talked to you about their concerns. However, we did say that they should not be playing 18s. And that they should limit their usage. It is clear that an increasing number of children are spending many hours a day gaming. They were also strongly advised to talk to someone if they were worried about a friend's behaviours. They were also told to go home and check on their devices and apps how to report, how to block and to check out CEOP.

Children will be receiving plenty of new and exciting gifts at Christmas - their first phone, a new phone, a new game. What will you do to make sure you know they can use them safely and responsibly?

We hope you find this letter informative and helpful. We also welcome feedback on this very important subject. Perhaps you have a top tip which you think other parents would find helpful.