

Parents of children in Y5+6

March 2017

Online Safety and App Advice

Online Safety is an integral part of keeping children safe at Loose Primary School. Online Safety is taught to all pupils explaining and demonstrating how to stay safe and behave appropriately online.

The children at our school have a very good understanding of keeping safe online which they display consistently in their learning. We always encourage children to embed this practice outside of school and with your support, this can be achieved. Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep safe and behave appropriately online whilst using apps and playing games. Following our recent online safety workshops with Sue Kemsely (our local safety PCSO) a number of issues were raised by some children.

Whilst we can speak to children in school about safe and appropriate behaviour online, we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work together with parents and carers to ensure that online safety messages are consistent.

Key points that were raised:

- **App age ratings** - Some children were quite surprised at the age ratings that came with some of the apps which they have on their devices. Even in cases where children were using the apps sensibly and with parental consent, lots were unaware that these apps come with advertisements not suitable for their age. A full list of age restrictions can be found at www.net-aware.org.uk. We strongly advise that you consider adding your son/daughter on each social media platform they use so that you know, and are comfortable with how they are using them. This includes apps where the age rating is above their actual age, eg Snapchat, Whatsapp and Instagram.
- **Online gaming** - In some cases, children are using online gaming tools that allow them to speak with other gamers; not always knowing who the other person that they are talking is. During the workshop, the children worked through a number of different scenarios that showed them how easy it was to end up speaking with a complete stranger and how people can create false profiles to access their information. Ask your child who they are playing with and find out if they are talking to other players – be aware this may include strangers as well as friends and family members. If online chat is available, then consider the type of language that is used by other players and how you may need to manage possible risks relating to concerns such as bullying and contact by strangers.
- **Instagram** – Some children discussed how they have Instagram accounts and use it to build a collection of ‘followers’ and in some cases, not even knowing the people that were following them. Again, the workshop showed the children how this personal information can be easily shared amongst complete strangers and the risk that this puts the children in.
- **The Yellow app** – This is a new dating app which has been described as “Tinder for Teenagers.” This was raised on a few occasions within some of the Year 6 online safety workshops. The app itself allows teenagers ranging from 13 to 17 to meet up – it also links with Snapchat to help its users find new friends. We are very concerned about the safety implications of this app and would urge you to check that it is not on your child’s device or phone.
- **House Party app** – This is a new app (similar to Face Time) allows up to eight people to group chat through video messaging. The workshops discussed how any video or image shared can be recorded easily without

consent or knowledge that it is happening. It was also discussed how these group chats can lead to incidents involving peer pressure, accessing inappropriate material and cyber bullying.

- Always visit and read the guidance for parents/carers on any devices (such as tablets) and games consoles your child accesses: www.internetmatters.org and www.saferinternet.org.uk have useful guidance about parental controls.

For more advice and information visit the following websites:

- www.askaboutgames.com
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the “Parent/Carer” Section
- www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/gaming
- www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety - NSPCC’s Share Aware campaign www.parentport.org.uk – Report inappropriate content
- www.saferinternet.org.uk – Guidance regarding parental controls and devices
- www.internetmatters.org – Information from the four largest internet service providers
- www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date Security advice including using complex passwords and managing hacked accounts
- www.internetmatters.org – Information from the four largest internet service providers (BT, Sky, Talk Talk and Virgin)
- www.net-aware.org.uk – NSPCC provides information about popular social media sites, apps and games
- www.kent.police.uk/internetsafety - Guidance from Kent Police
- www.kent.gov.uk/esafety - Guidance from Kent County Council

Also view our website for advice and tips <http://www.loose-primary.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Internet+Safety&pid=20>

If you have any concerns or queries regarding online safety then please do contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Holman
Deputy Headteacher and Safeguarding and Online Safety Leader