St. Luke's Catholic Primary School

We follow in the footsteps of Jesus as we live, love and learn together.

6th February 2017

Dear Parents

Staying aware of your children's on line activity.

Tomorrow, Tuesday 7th February is **Safer Internet Day**. We believe that this is an opportune moment to share some advice, to help you keep aware of what your children are doing when they are online.

We are aware that many of our pupils have their own phones, as well as accessing the internet via tablets, lap tops and desk top computers. It is important to be aware of what and with whom they are communicating using their phones, and that **their safety is more important than their right to privacy**. Other basic points include not allowing their real names and details to be published. If your child is a gamer then they should use a username and allow only their friends to know what it is.

As a school we believe that all our children are too young to be on social media. Indeed most operators set a minimum age of 13. However, we are aware that many of our pupils participate on several platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. If you do allow your child to participate on social media, then it is essential that you check their activity at least weekly and that you take note of who they follow and who follows your child. I am sure that you are aware from the media that not everyone is who they say they are online. Sometimes the consequences of this fact have had fatal outcomes.

Furthermore whilst it is vital to keep all our children safe, it is also important to make sure that our children are in turn behaving themselves on line. Posting messages which upset other children could lead to the involvement of the police.

There are many decisions which you as parents and we as a school make to keep our children safe in everyday life despite their possible objections. It is crucial that we all understand that this responsibility extends to supervising children when they are communicating using technology.

I hope that you find the attached advice helpful. All of the advice can be found at

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/

Mr Holleron

Deputy Head Teacher

Computing Co-ordinator.

Below is some advice from the Safer Internet Centre

At the end are some links to some sites with some videos and extra information which you may also find helpful.

What are the issues?

The internet – on the whole an inspiring and positive place
The internet is an amazing resource which enables children and young people to connect, communicate and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of devices.

However, the internet is always changing, and being able to keep up to date with your children's use of technology can be a challenge.

You may sometimes feel that your children have better technical skills than you do, however children and young people still need advice and protection when it comes to managing their lives online.

Issues that your child may encounter on the internet will vary depending on their age and online activities. We have grouped potential online risks into these 4 categories.

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own behaviour, for example, by sharing too much information
Children need to be aware of the impact that their online activity can have on both themselves and other people, and the digital footprint that they create on the internet. It's easy to feel anonymous online and it's important that children are aware of who is able to view, and potentially share, the information that they may have posted. When using the internet, it's important to keep personal information safe and not share it with strangers. Discuss with your child the importance of reporting inappropriate conversations, messages, images and behaviours and how this can be done.

Content: age-inappropriate or unreliable content can be available to children
Some online content is not suitable for children and may be hurtful or harmful. This is true for content accessed and viewed via social networks, online games, blogs and websites. It's important for children to consider the reliability of online material and be aware that it might not be true or written with a bias. Children may need your help as they begin to assess content in this way. There can be legal consequences for using or downloading copyrighted content, without seeking the author's permission.

Contact: children can be contacted by bullies or people who groom or seek to abuse them
It is important for children to realise that new friends made online may not be who they say they are and that once a friend is added to an online account, you may be sharing your personal information with them. Regularly reviewing friends lists and removing unwanted contacts is a useful step. Privacy settings online may also allow you to customise the information that each friend is able to access. If you have concerns that your child is, or has been, the subject of inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person, it's vital that you report it to the police via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (**www.ceop.police.uk**). If your child is the victim of cyberbullying, this can also be reported online and offline. Reinforce with your child the importance of telling a trusted adult straight away if someone is bullying them or making them feel uncomfortable, or if one of their friends is being bullied online.

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising in apps, games and websites
Young people's privacy and enjoyment online can sometimes be affected by advertising and marketing schemes, which can also mean inadvertently spending money online, for example within applications. Encourage your children to keep their personal information private, learn how to block both pop ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchasing on devices where possible, and use a family email address when filling in online forms.

The theme for Safer Internet Day 2017 is 'Be the change: Unite for a better internet'.

Everyone has their part to play in making the internet a better place so these tips and links below are a great way to ensure that you are supporting your child to stay safe and positive online.

1. ### Be engaged

   Talk regularly with your children about how they use technology, and find out what their digital life is like, including how they communicate using images and videos. Perhaps you can start off by discussing your favourite emojis?
   Watch our SID TV film for parents and carers on the importance of making time to talk:

2. ### Be aware
   Explore the online features of the devices you already own in your family and the devices you might buy for your child in the future. Knowing how to activate and use parental controls can help protect your child from seeing inappropriate content online.
   For advice and guides on how to make use of parental controls and other safety features on devices, check out our free Parents' Guide to Technology.

3. ### Be there

   The most important thing is to ensure that you are there if something goes wrong. Your child might be very embarrassed to discuss the issue they are facing so reassure them that they can turn to you no matter what.

   You are always there to help your children but make sure you know how to get support too by visiting our 'Need Help?' page.

4. Be thoughtful

   The internet provides a platform for billions of people to share their views and opinions but not everything or everyone online is trustworthy. Encourage your children to think critically about the things they see online including the images and videos they view on social media. Discussing what they have seen and the message behind a photo or a video can help them consider the difference between fact and opinion, and that there is sometimes more than meets the eye.
   Need some help starting a conversation? **Check out our conversation starters for ways of striking up a conversation with your child about what they see online.**

   https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/sid-2016/sid-tv

   https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2017/tips-for-children-and-young-people

   https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-technology

   https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-help