Online Safety & Cyberbullying

Dear Parents/Carers,

We accept and understand that mobile phones, social media, online gaming and having access to the internet are a part of modern life and education in many ways. We know that for children it is a key means of socialising and communicating with friends, which is an important part of growing up. However, the online world can and does still present young people with a range of concerns and challenges such as fake news, influencers, inappropriate material, and even extreme ideologies. Unfortunately, the algorithms that now exist mean that this content can be presented to children without them requesting it or even searching for it.

Another major pitfall of the online world is cyberbullying. The online world is one they can always be connected to and sadly this can be with people they do not want to contact them. In support of this we have had PC Angleo, our School Liaison Officer deliver an assembly this week to all students to remind them that cyberbullying is a reportable offence, and they should not be tolerating it. We are not naïve in recognising how unkind children can be to one another and this is magnified online. We see and hear reports that Whatsapp group chats and Snapchat can be problematic for this.

There are several other apps that can present children with difficulties, some are positive but also allow negative behaviours to be perpetrated. The link below highlights these and the reasons why.

https://www.familyeducation.com/entertainment-activities/online/a-complete-guide-to-potentially-dangerous-apps-all-parents-should-be-aware-of

This list is forever changing and a recent one of concern is called Yubo. An online dating app for children, without any regulations on ages of those who can sign up. In support of this, we have a dedicated section to our website to support parents https://bramcote.college/parents/online-safety

On here you will find advice and guidance on how to support your child online. As a school we have signed up to National Online Safety, which provides detailed information to support parents. You can follow them on social media platforms but also access their resources via our website by signing up.

Overall, I know how difficult it can be to navigate the online world and for parents to expertly keep a handle on what their children may be doing when the online world is moving at such a fast rate.

Parental Tips for Online Safety

- Talk to your children about their online use and who they are speaking to or connecting with
- Speak to them about the apps they use and why they use them
- Set-up parental controls from your own devices. Parental phones can clone a child's phone or can be used to put safety measures in place. This may seem technologically daunting but it is the best way of keeping an oversight

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- Check and review their phones or consoles for apps and chat groups. Much in the same way you would verbally speak to them about conversations they have in person, ask them about chat groups and what might be said by others
- Put boundaries in place for how long they use it and do not allow it to encroach on bedtime routines. Online use can have a negative impact on sleep, which in turn can have an affect on their mood, concentration and over time, their mental health

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Mr S Morton

Deputy Headteacher