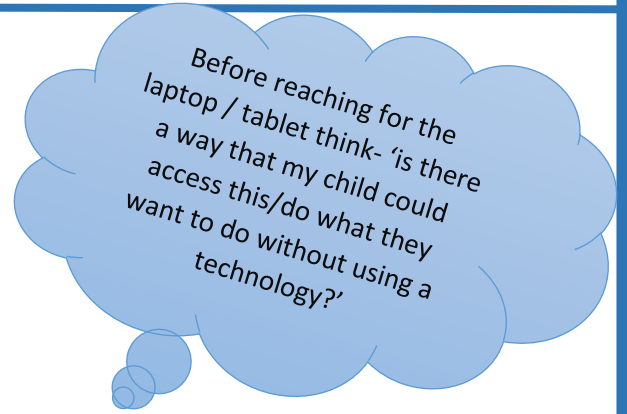# Staying Safe Online

As we are confined to our homes due to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are using the internet and online services more now than perhaps ever before. Being online is providing a lifeline for everyone in society from the young to the old, learners and workers, and the vulnerable, curious and those seeking an escape from boredom. This is probably, therefore, a good time to remind ourselves of a few key points to keep safe online.

Before reaching for the laptop / tablet think- 'is there a way that my child could access this/do what they want to do without using a technology?'

Tips for keeping children safe online

- Have a conversation with your child - not everything on the internet is kind or real. Tell your child that if they see something that worries them or they don't like, then they must tell a grown up straight away.
- Make sure that you have eyes on their screen at all times. Young children should not be watching things such as YouTube in their bedrooms or places where an adult is not there to monitor what they are looking at.
- Age restrictions: Most online content/video games have age restrictions. These restrictions are there for a reason and should be adhered to. Young children should not be exposed to content that is not age appropriate.

Parental Controls

Give your child a safe space to explore their curiosity online.

Internetmatters.org provides step by step guides that will help you to set up the right controls and privacy settings on the networks, gadgets, apps, and sites that your child uses to give them a safer online experience.

Online safety advice

NSPCC is a leading children's charity. They have a broad range of online safety advice on their website, including the risks of online gaming, livestreaming and online video apps.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Screen time

- Have a conversation and discuss: 'What is a reasonable amount of time to spend on an electronic device?' Limit their screen time to what **you** think is acceptable. Screens should not get in the way of face to face interactions. Remember for younger children, face-to-face social interaction is vital to the development of language and other skills, and screen-based interaction is not an effective substitute for this.
- Stick to a bedtime routine: Children should not be looking at screens right before bedtime, it disturbs their sleep and can stop them from having a good night's rest. Enjoy a lovely bedtime story instead!
- Think of other ways to spend your time other than using devices - crafts, baking and spending time outside, going out for daily exercise and enjoying time as a family.

Other useful websites:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/4_7/
https://www.childnet.com/
https://parentinfo.org/
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers