Safeguarding Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

We regularly update staff on relevant news on safeguarding children in primary school, but we thought it would be useful if parents and carers were also kept up-to-date with anything that might prove useful in helping keep our children safe. This information is taken from lots of different sources, e.g. new legislation; charities such as the NSPCC and other relevant websites.

Game and online safety website for 8 to 10-year-olds

CEOP's (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) has launched Band Runner, an interactive game for 8 to 10-year-olds to help build their knowledge, confidence and skills to stay safe from risks they might encounter online. This game is hosted on the Thinkuknow website.
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/band-runner/

Particularly useful after the Christmas period, when the children may have been on screens more frequently, this can be a helpful way for you to engage with them about making safe and smart decisions whilst online.

Common Sense Media

Can I buy this game? Can I download that app? Can we watch this movie?

I've mentioned this website before in Online Safety talks with parents/carers but thought I'd mention it again – this is a fantastic tool that helps parents make informed choices about what we expose our children to. If you're not sure about the content of an app, film or even a book (I know, remember those?) then go to the Common Sense Media website and research it there.

On this fantastic resource, you'll gain a quick insight into whether or not you think something is suitable for your child. It covers aspects such as sexual content, swearing and violence, as well as telling you what other parents and children think about it, and what aged children they would recommend are suitable to view it.

To give you a sample of the usefulness of this website, follow these links which have been recently compiled, detailing free action games you can download for your children to play that are either non-violent, or don't use guns at all.
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/gun-free-action-game-apps

https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/thought-provoking-nonviolent-games-for-tweens-and-teens

Smartie the Penguin

CyberSafety for 3 to 7-year-olds (ChildNet)

For those of you with KS1 children, this set of fun activities can help younger children take their first steps online covering these three themes: 1.) Pop ups and in app purchasing 2.) Inappropriate websites for older children 3.) Cyberbullying
https://www.childnet.com/resources/smartie-the-penguin

Years 4, 5 and 6 recently received an Online Safety workshop from our police school support officer. Lots of information was covered but one of the most interesting pieces was **that Whatsapp had recently raised their minimum age of use from 13 years old to 16 years old.**

A number of children in Years 5 and 6 mentioned that they already had a Whatsapp account whilst others mentioned wanting one as older siblings used it. This made me think you might appreciate knowing a bit more about the risks associated with this app. If you do, follow these links below:

https://parentinfo.org/article/whatsapp-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/platform-guides/whatsapp-guide-for-parents/

Fortnite: Battle Royale

Lots of children play Fortnite in the school and it's useful to remind ourselves about a few tips concerning playing safe online.

First thing to bear in mind, the makers of this game consider it to have a PEGI rating of 12. This means they don't think anyone in primary school should be playing it. I'll talk about PEGI ratings in the next newsletter but I think the bigger online safety lesson to learn with games like Fortnite is that the children can play the game with a headset, which allows them to listen to other players and what they're saying whilst in the game.

Obviously, this means they can hear whatever the other people are saying, even if that happens to be swearing or racist language. An interesting experiment is to play the game and put it through the TV speakers so you can hear what's going on; this should give you an idea of what goes on in the game.

Secondly, the game allows players to upgrade their avatars by buying new outfits, skins, weapons etc...and to do this they need V-Bucks (or Vindertech Bucks). These can be bought online using debit or credit cards so be mindful as to whether or not your card details, or even PayPal accounts, are linked into the games console or tablet your child is using. A big (unexpected) bill is sometimes only a click away. Why not click on the purchase options if your child is playing this game and see if it is automatically linking to your payment details as another interesting experiment.

For those of you whose children are yet to be interested in playing Fortnite here's a useful guide below to the game as a whole:

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/fortnite-battle-royale-parents-guide/