Safeguarding Bulletin for Parents/Carers
7th December 2023

Please see the below information on **online safety** that may be of interest to parents/carers as we all navigate our way through the often confusing, online world.

Xmas devices

As Xmas is approaching many children and young people will be asking for new devices. It's important that parents think carefully about these devices and the parental features that are available. It's equally important that parents think about what the device will be used for, e.g. an all-singing-all-dancing smartphone when it will only be used for messaging and the odd phone call, would a simpler phone be better?

Internet Matters has put together a some useful guides for parents:
- How to choose the right phone for your child - **HERE**
- Children's tech guide 2023 - guides on a huge range of tech from laptops to gaming consoles, smart TV's and much more - **HERE**.

Updated Supervision Features for FB Messenger and Instagram

Meta rolled out some new parental features for FB Messenger and Instagram. These updates are now available globally.

Specific updates for Messenger:
- View how much time the child spends on the app.
- Updates on their contact list.
- Notification if the child reports someone.
- View who can message their child.
- View who can see their child's stories.

Specific updates for Instagram:
- Before being able to message someone who doesn't follow them, people must now send a text only invite to connect (in other words, no more unwanted explicit photos from people you don't follow). No further interaction can take place unless the recipient accepts the invite.

There are some positive steps within these updates and there is further information **HERE**.

Discord Family Centre

Discord used to be popular with gamers and it's now hugely popular amongst non-gamers too. Historically Discord has been very lax regarding features that are available for parents to help keep their children safe, but this has recently changed, albeit the changes are a minuscule step in the right direction, at least it's something.

Essentially, like many other apps, Discord now has a Family Center. Once set up parents can see:
- What servers (chat rooms) their children have joined or participated in.
- Everyone they've messaged.

- New users they've connected with.

You can read more about these functions and limitations **HERE**. **THIS** page will show parents how to set up Family Center.

Parents' Guide to WhatsApp

As one of the most popular messaging apps used by all age ranges and around 2.7 billion monthly users, WhatsApp has been adding new features over the last year or so which some parents may not be aware of. Internet Matters have put together a useful 'how-to' guide for parents which you can access **HERE**.

WhatsApp - Locked Chats

Did you know that you can hide conversations and lock them away in WhatsApp? This was a feature introduced in May 2023 and was easy to spot (if you knew how), but WhatsApp have updated the feature which makes it much more difficult to find.

In the original update you had to swipe down in the 'Chats' window to see locked chats, then input a code, fingerprint or Face ID to unlock (see **THIS** 1 minute video on YouTube). However, this meant that other people (parents, teachers, partners) would be able to see that you have got locked chats, even if you can't see the content. WhatsApp have just updated this (being rolled out worldwide from the beginning of December) and locked chats can now only be viewed by entering a secret code into the search bar, meaning that you will not be able to tell if there are any locked chats without knowing the code which WhatsApp briefly explains **HERE**.

Guide to Snapchat MyAI

Chatbots are springing up everywhere now, including within apps that children and young people use, and there have been some concerns over the ethics, the information and guidance that is being given by the chatbot and more, particularly in relation to guidance that is age appropriate, privacy concerns and misinformation.

Wayne Denver has put together a really useful updated article for parents explaining what the chatbot is, how it works, the issues and some tips for parents. You can find the article **HERE**.

Why do Children use Anonymous Apps?

This is an interesting article from Internet Matters where young people talk about why they use anonymous apps, which ones they use, the risks and how they stay safe. You can find the full article **HERE**.

Note: the article refers to Omegle which no longer exists, but it explores the wider use of anonymous apps. Also, the article refers to teens. Many younger children may use anonymous apps.

What are Social Media Scams?

With online scams on the rise worldwide, particularly at this time of year, it's important we are all aware of what scams are, the common types of scams and helpful tips. Internet Matters have a great information page for parents with lots of useful information. You can find all the information **HERE**.

Helping Children Create a Kinder World Online

At the moment there seems to be a lot of hate online and being reported in the media. In this article from Internet Matters, 3 experts discuss how to create a kinder world online to promote positivity and kindness. You can see the Internet Matters article **HERE**.

For Parents of Teenagers - Common Online Scams

With Christmas approaching fast it's likely that online scams will increase significantly if it follows the pattern of previous years. In this article from Internet Matters a number of online scams which specifically target teens are explored from finance expert Ademolawa Ibrahim Ajibade. You can see the article **HERE**.

Using Google Family Link app

The Google Family Link has come on in leaps and bounds over the years, allowing parents greater management of their child's Google accounts (e.g. Youtube) and Android devices. This includes children under the age of 13.

Internet Matters have put together a useful article explaining exactly what Google Family Link is plus details instructions on how to set it up and use it.

You can find the article **HERE.**

YouTube Supervised Accounts

Please see link **HERE** to a webpage which has 5 very simple videos showing parents how to set up and use Supervised Experience, YouTube Kids (which also has new settings).

Conversation Starters

One of the more common questions parents ask is, "How do I start that conversation with my child?" Early and continuing conversations is important and should not be any different from any other normal conversation. However, sometimes those conversations are best reserved for the school run in the car where there is no direct eye contact, so the conversation for adult/child can be easier.

To help parents, Internet Matters have put together some conversation starters and tips to help which you can find **HERE**.

Supporting Young Girls' Wellbeing

From managing screen time, the fear of missing out and body image. All these and more can affect the wellbeing of children. Internet Matters have put together a series of articles for parents and although aimed at 9-10 year old girls, it is worthwhile for all older and younger children of all genders.

You can see the advice page **HERE**.