

17th December 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Online Safety Newsletter – December 2020

New phones, games and games consoles

This Christmas, many children will receive new phones, games or games consoles as gifts. There are inherent risks with children using new devices and playing new games, especially if they are new and unfamiliar to you as well.

When a child starts using a phone, it is much easier to set from day 1 how the phone will be used rather than trying to add rules once the child has had the phone for a while. It is well worth considering and jointly agreeing such things as:

- which apps will be allowed on the phone;
- times that children will be allowed to use the phone;
- how regularly you will check their phone and its content;
- what parental controls will be enabled;
- whether a parental control app will be used (see below);

A training video is being circulated soon with advice on supporting your children with their phones. Please also see the following link to advice on setting up a smartphone or other internet connected device:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/smartphones-and-other-devices/>

We have asked our Digital Leaders to collect advice from across the school on how families can ensure that new games and consoles are enjoyed safely. These are things they came up with:

- Check the age rating of the games to ensure they are appropriate.
- Play the games as a family so that parents know what the games involve.
- Research the games on the internet.
- Change the settings so that the games can be played safely and appropriately.
- Agree when the games can be played and for how long.

Parental Control apps

Some parents find it useful to manage their child's phone remotely using parental control apps. Such apps let parents determine what can and cannot be done on their children's phone and monitor how they are used. There are many such apps available to be used on Apple and Android devices. Here are links to two popular apps are:

Net Nanny - <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/net-nanny-parental-control-app/id1211763414>

Google Family Link - <https://families.google.com/familylink/>

Headteacher: Miss S McGann

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs K Saunders

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If you choose to use a parental control app, please ensure that it is done in way that does not erode trust between parent and child. Children should always feel that they can talk to their parents about their online lives and if such apps are not used appropriately then there is a risk that it could lead to a breakdown in trust and communication.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stevens

Computing coordinator

Headteacher: Miss S McGann Deputy Headteacher: Mrs K Saunders

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