

Welcome to a whole new world!

Our children and young people have been born into the 'digital age'. They are surrounded by ICT and use it increasingly both in and out of school. Computers, tablets, mobile phones and games consoles are an integral part of their everyday lives and allow access to powerful communication, collaboration and research tools. Very often, compared to us, our children know their way around this world better than we do and are the 'experts' in this field!



However, along with the opportunities that the technology brings there undoubtedly come risks. It is our duty as parents, carers and educators to encourage appropriate behavior when using ICT as young people simply do not have the life experience of adults and will need our support and guidance. Whilst considering how to provide this we need to consider that e-safety

@ is less about placing restrictions but more about educating about the risks as well as the benefits so we can all feel confident online

@ is concerned with safeguarding children and young people in the digital world whilst supporting them to develop safer online behaviours

@ emphasizes the need to understand and use technologies in a positive and appropriate way

One of the best ways we can do this is to involve ourselves in their world by ensuring we talk to them about what they are doing and promoting safe and responsible use. Asking our children to show us for example, how to use the Moshi Monsters site or set privacy settings on Facebook will not only teach us how to do this but will allow us to see how much our child knows about using the sites wisely and is a great conversation starter.

Top Tips to share with your child

Ask your child to:

- ◆ Always ask permission before using the Internet
- ◆ Only use websites chosen together
- ◆ Think carefully before they post anything online and not share anything they would not share with you
- ◆ Only email people they know—consider setting up an address book for them to use
- ◆ Not use their real name when using games or websites on the Internet—create a nick-name
- ◆ Never give out any personal information about themselves, friends or family online including their home address, phone or mobile number
- ◆ Never arrange to meet someone they have 'met' on the Internet without talking to you or a trusted adult first
- ◆ Never tell someone they don't know where they go to school or post any pictures of themselves in school uniform
- ◆ Not use a webcam and to tell you if anyone asks them to, even people they know
- ◆ Tell you immediately if:
 - ◆ They see anything they are unhappy with
 - ◆ Anybody says anything which makes them feel uncomfortable
 - ◆ Someone asks them to meet them or tells them to keep their chats a secret

Safer social Networking

Used appropriately social networking can be a positive experience. Not just a great way to be in touch with friends and family (e.g. Facebook), it also extends to sharing information and engaging with people in online forums (e.g. Moneysavingexpert.com). There are however some precautions we should all take.

- ◆ Learn how to use the site properly. Use the privacy features to restrict strangers' access to your profile. Consider carefully who you let join your network.
- ◆ Be wary of publishing any identifying information about yourself—either in your profile or in your posts—such as phone numbers, pictures of your home, workplace or school, your address or birthday. Think before publishing other information too such as comments about forthcoming holidays which announce to all that your house will soon be empty!
- ◆ Never post anything that may be considered abusive or may cause offence either to individuals or groups of society. If you wouldn't say it face to face don't say it online.
- ◆ Consider that what goes online stays online and becomes public property. Be careful not to say anything or publish pictures that might later cause you or someone else embarrassment
- ◆ Be aware that many companies routinely view current or prospective employees' social networking pages, so be careful about what you say, what pictures you post and your profile

Many Social Networking sites and Instant Messaging applications have the facility to report inappropriate content. For example Facebook has a 'Report' link on each page whilst Bebo has a 'Report abuse' link on each profile page and below every piece of content (i.e. photo, video etc.). As a parent you can make reports on your child's behalf by visiting the parent's section of the CEOP website (www.ceop.gov.uk)

