



Online Safety February 2021

Now more than ever, in one form or another, children are spending more of their time online. Trying to keep them as safe as possible, while still giving them opportunities to take advantage of technology can be challenging, yet vital.

Thankfully, there are some incredibly useful and easy to understand websites which provide lots of information about technology, apps and games.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Net Aware

This is a website which, in partnership with NSPCC, has a range of advice all in one place.

Please remember, that on our school website, we have:

- an eSafety page full of advice and links for parents
- a page for children to help them understand how to stay safe online.



Whatsapp



I'm sure most adults are aware, and make use of, Whatsapp and an increasing number of children in the school are doing so as well. At the present time, this is a great app for everyone to stay in contact, but for children, it poses great risks.

Over the past few years, almost all the eSafety incidents outside of school, which have been reported to us by parents, have involved this app. Issues generally arise from children:

- not being emotionally mature enough to understand the consequences and impact on others of what they are posting
- posting messages as a 'joke' – not understanding this can't be done via texts
- being added to chat groups by friends without permission, meaning their phone number is being shared with everyone in that group, sometimes involving much older children.
- receiving inappropriate content: swearing, sexualised language, threatening language, images

The age limit on Whatsapp is 16 as it is not an appropriate or safe app for children to be using under this age.

Parents do need to be responsible for their child's online communication. From speaking to some parents who allow their children to use texting as a form of communication, they have clear rules around its use. The children understand that at any point, their parents can (and do) look through their messages. By having this clear rule from the start, it becomes 'the norm' and children will be more conscious about their posts. It is much easier take this preventative approach rather than punishing and clamping down once damage has been done.

If you would like any further advice, please visit our school website, or contact myself through the office.

Mr Burt

Assistant Headteacher + eSafety Leader