22ND MAY

INTERNET SAFETY IN CHRIST THE SAVIOUR NS

E L A I N E M C H A L E

- Masters (ICT in Primary Education)
- Former Lecturer at Mary Immaculate College (ICT in Education)
- Oide Technology in Education
  - Course writer
  - E-tutor
- National Digital Citizenship Champion (one of 80 nationwide)
- IT Coordinator

OBJECTIVES OF TONIGHT'S SESSION

- Highlight areas of concern we as a school community have.
- Consider the role of children, parents and teachers in being safe online.
- Discuss the Smartphone Free Childhood Initiative

CONFIDENTIALITY

- I will speak generally about our experiences to give you a sense of concerns nationally.
  - Most examples are from this school (anonymised)
- The focus tonight will be on open lines of communication
  - Between you and your child
  - Between home and school
- If you have concerns about a specific incident at home please make an appointment for a phone call or meeting, do not raise it here tonight.
- Judgement Free – All parents are making the choices they feel are best for their family.

WE LOVE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES!

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

- Positives outweigh the negatives
  - Huge potential for learning and fun with digital technologies
  - Vast amount of accurate information available to children
  - Children can interact with subject experts and with like-minded peers

- We need to ensure children can engage with all these resources in a safe and responsible way

TOP CONCERNS FOR IRISH PARENTS

"...cyberbullying, spending too much time online, online grooming/exploitation and accessing inappropriate content."

Webwise // NPC Parenting Survey 2017

MAIN TOPICS TONIGHT

- These are some of the incidents that parents and teachers in our school are dealing with:

  - Overuse of technology/devices
  - Social Media
  - Cyberbullying
  - Inappropriate content

OVERUSE OF DEVICES

- What's the problem?
  - Tiredness
  - Lack of time for other activities
  - Disengaged from conversations and family life
  - Disimproved concentration skills

OVERUSE OF DEVICES

- Incidents in Ballingarry
  - Screens in bedrooms
    - TVs, gaming devices, phones
    - Children coming to school tired
    - Unsupervised access
    - In contact with strangers without parents' knowledge
  - Concentration
    - Training our brains to concentrate for less time
  - Social Skill Difficulties
    - Children need boredom
    - Children need lots of social interaction

OVERUSE OF DEVICES

- What's the solution?
  - Plan carefully **before** introducing devices
  - Create a contract between you and your child
  - Consider making the device a shared family device
  - Set clear limits and stick to them
  - Have alternative activities
  - Screens in shared communal areas **only**
  - Set up parental controls **before** giving your child access

SOCIAL MEDIA

- What's the problem?
  - Developmentally unsuitable
  - Compare and despair
  - Pressure for likes
  - Cyberbullying
  - Unsupervised contact with others
  - Access to inappropriate material

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED

- Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- Examples of social media include:
  - Facebook
  - WhatsApp
  - Instagram
  - Snapchat
  - Tik Tok
  - YouTube
  - Gaming with group communication between users

DIGITAL AGE OF CONSENT

- Ireland introduced a digital age of consent to require companies to have different GDPR rules for young people.
- The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16, or with parental permission 13.
    - The downside to this is, if companies are assuming there are no children on their platforms, they are not obligated to make their platforms "child-friendly" or "child-safe". They are assuming that their users are all over 16, or over 13 and supervised by parents.

ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

- In theory this means that no children in our primary school would have access to social media.
- As a parent/guardian, you must decide if they need access to social media before the age of 13.
  - Is there a safer alternative?
  - What is your reason for saying yes?
- If you choose to allow your children to have access to social media, responsibility lies with you.
  - How will you prepare and educate them to use social media responsibly?
  - How will you monitor social media use?
  - How will you engage with your child so they can talk to you about their social media use?
- Schools do not use social media for teaching and learning and cannot teach the children about specific apps, other than general rules and guides for being safe online. This is not enough. Parents must lead this learning.

S N A P C H A T

- Users must be 13. You must enter your birth date to set up an account, but there's no age verification, so it's easy for kids under 13 to sign up.
- Common Sense Media rates Snapchat OK for teens 16 and up, mainly because of the exposure to age-inappropriate content and the marketing ploys, such as quizzes, that collect data.
- Images and messages disappear after being viewed.
  - This makes it difficult for parents and teachers to deal with incidents.
- There are risks for children receiving images.
- There are also risks for children saving/sending/forwarding images
  - Coco's Law – introduced to combat revenge porn

TIK TOK

- TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short videos. The app is used by people as an outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and lip-syncing, and allows users to create videos and share them across a community
- TikTok has a minimum user age of 13 years-old but common sense media recommends it for age 15+
- It does however have a separate section of the app for under 13s
- Users may be exposed to bad language and content of a sexual nature.
- Users can comment on other videos, this leaves the potential for online bullying or negative comments.
- Children with access to these apps sharing the content with children who don't
- With anything shared online, we recommend getting to know how the app works, checking your privacy settings and always use the Granny Rule!

YOUTUBE

- Many pupils have YouTube accounts now where they share videos.
- If using YouTube, rather than Kids Tube, please ensure:
  - You know what your child is sharing
  - You are supervising the comments if they are enabled
  - Your child is aware who they are sharing content with.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- What's the solution?
  - Don't allow your child to access social media!
    - It is developmentally inappropriate.
    - It is very hard to monitor.
    - Consider our Smartphone Free Childhood Agreement so no child ends up isolated.
  - Use Webwise or Common Sense Media to understand the apps fully **before** allowing your child to download them.
    - Discuss the suggested talking points with your child.
  - Set up parental controls
  - Create a contract between you and your child

CYBERBULLYING

- What's the problem?
  - Upset amongst peer groups
  - Mental Health impact – anxiety, depression, isolation
  - Children being baited into responding or sharing personal details
  - Impact on teaching and learning
  - Difficult for parents and teachers to navigate
  - Serious consequences

CYBERBULLYING DEFINITION

- Many schools define bullying as any acts that are:
  - Hurtful
  - Deliberate
  - **Repeated**
- Because a negative comment or picture online can be viewed repeatedly, one incidence is considered bullying.
- Inaction implies compliance
  - Liking, sharing and saying nothing is a huge part of the problem

CYBERBULLYING

- What's the solution?
  - Cyberbullying Video
  - Teach your child about appropriate comments online
    - This includes unkind comments, and spamming the group
  - Teach your child about not engaging with unkind posts
  - Prepare your child **before** they have independent online access
  - Teach your child about their responsibility as a bystander
  - Be prepared to be the bad guy!

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

- What's the problem?
  - If a child has internet access without adult supervision, this can create an easy access point for both unintentional and intentional exposure to inappropriate content, up to and including pornography.
  - Children can’t "unsee" graphic content
  - Children may also experience sexually explicit material in other places that have different levels of supervision e.g. other homes your child visits.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

- What's the solution?
  - If a young person is asking questions related to bodies and sex, be prepared to have open, age-appropriate conversations.
    - This responds to their natural curiosity and makes it clear that you are a trusted adult they can turn to for answers and shame free support.
- Familiarise yourself with the devices you give to a child, set up parental controls and work with the child to establish agreements for safe device use.
- Maintain open communication with the adults in other homes your child visits
  - Remember other parents will have different rules to you
- In the following video Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist Colman Noctor offers advice for parents on talking to your child about online pornography.
  - https://vimeo.com/200804489

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON LEARNING?

- Tiredness
- Lack of Concentration
- Unhappiness
- Time given to investigation

NEXT STEPS

1. Set up parental controls
2. Manage screen time
3. Set guidelines around technology use
4. Talk to your child about online safety and online responsibility
5. If removing devices, plan alternative activites
6. Lead by example
7. Create a contract

IN AN IDEAL WORLD...

- All parents have time to engage fully with their children's online world.
- All parents have the time to monitor digital technologies fully.
- All parents have the time to research and review apps for their children.
- All parents have the time teach their children to be responsible digital citizens.
- All parents are fully on board with the age limits and recommendations.
- Plus all the other millions of jobs parents are expected to be on top of!!!

WHAT'S THE NEXT BEST THING?

- Delay is the way!
  - Until children are emotionally and developmentally ready.
  - Until the school can do **age appropriate** workshops with the children
  - Until your child understands and agrees to rules and boundaries
  - Until you are happy to speak to your children about pornography
- Smartphone Free Childhood Initiative supports all of this
  - No child isolated
  - No peer pressure on parents

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE

- What is it?
- Why did our school community choose to start it?
- How did we set it up?
- What has the impact been so far?
- Where can you find further information?

WHAT DOES THE AGREEMENT LOOK LIKE?

Christ the Saviour NS
Parents' Council
Smartphone Free Childhood Agreement

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Parent/Guardian:

As the parent or guardian of the above student, I agree with the following statements:
(Read carefully and only tick the points that apply to you)

- ☐ I will not give my child their own phone during primary school.
- ☐ I will not allow my child to have their own social media accounts during primary school.
- ☐ I am happy for my child to have social media accounts but I understand that the recommended age is 13 and I am responsible for my child's behaviour and safety on social media.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The parents' council respects each family's right to decide whether or not their children have access to social media or a smartphone and there is no obligation to return this form if you do not wish to do so. If you are happy to take part, please return the completed form to the school.

WANT TO SIGN UP?

- Chat through the agreement with your family.
- Complete the agreement, ticking only the options you have chosen.
- Return the agreement to the school if you wish.
- Ensure all adults involved with your child are aware of the Agreement.

DON'T WANT TO SIGN UP?

- Make a plan for educating your child **before** getting a device.
- Set up parental controls **before** giving your child the device.
- Create a contract between you and your child setting out the agreed rules and consequences.
- Ensure all adults involved with your child are aware of and on board with your rules.
- Review devices regularly.
- Stay up to date with apps.

RESOURCES

- Webwise
  - Instructions on parental controls
  - Explainer Videos for you and your child
- Common Sense Media
  - Explainer Pages with recommended ages and talking points
- Contracts between parents and children

QUESTIONS

THANK YOU