Parental Information Regarding Online Safety

I am writing to share information and resources that you may find useful with regards to ensuring your children understand how to use the internet safely and appropriately.

The internet is a rapidly growing resource for learning, socialising and playing games. It is a tool to be embraced for its functionality and ease of access. However, it can also be easy for internet use to become addictive and/or inappropriate.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) have developed a website which contains advice for parents and children regarding internet safety. Please visit the website www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents to access the information.

At St Joseph’s, all children have access to the internet but this is restricted to websites that are appropriate for primary age pupils. Internet safety is discussed as part of the ICT curriculum but as children are more likely to access inappropriate online material outside of school, it is really important for parents to understand the potential dangers. On the reverse of this letter are some ‘top tips’ devised by CEOP to help parents monitor and control internet use.

Finally, please contact the school office should you become aware of inappropriate online communication involving any pupils of St Joseph’s Roman Catholic School.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Titus
Headteacher
CEOP Top Tips For Internet Use

Talk to your child about what they are up to online. Be a part of their online life; involve the whole family and show an interest. Find out what sites they visit and what they love about them. If they know you understand, they are more likely to come to you if they have any problems.

Watch Thinkuknow films and cartoons with your child. The thinkuknow.co.uk website has films, games and advice for children from ages 5 to 16.

Encourage your child to go online and explore! There is a wealth of age-appropriate sites online for your children. Encourage them to use sites which are fun, educational and that will help them to develop online skills.

Keep up to date with your child’s development online. Children grow up fast and they will be growing in confidence and learning new skills daily. It is important that as your child learns more, so do you.

Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world. Think about what they might see, what they share, who they talk to and how long they spend online. It is important to discuss boundaries at a young age to develop the tools and skills children need to enjoy their time online.

Keep all equipment that connects to the internet in a family space. For children of this age, it is important to keep internet use in family areas so you can see the sites your child is using and be there for them if they stumble across something you would not want them to see.

Know what connects to the internet and how. Nowadays even the TV connects to the internet. Make sure you are aware of which devices that your child uses to connect to the internet, such as their mobile phone or games console. Also, find out how they are accessing the internet – is it your connection, or a neighbour’s wi-fi? This will affect whether the safety settings you put in place are being applied.

Use parental controls on devices that link to the internet, such as the TV, laptops, computers, games consoles and mobile phones. Parental controls are not just about locking and blocking, they are a tool to help you set appropriate boundaries as your child grows and develops. They are not the answer to your child’s online safety, but they are a good start and they are not as difficult to install as you might think. Internet service providers are working hard to make them simple, effective and user friendly. Contact your service provider to learn how to set your controls.