ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL ESAFETY NEWSLETTER

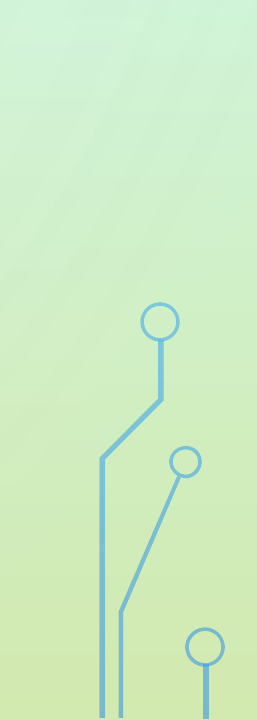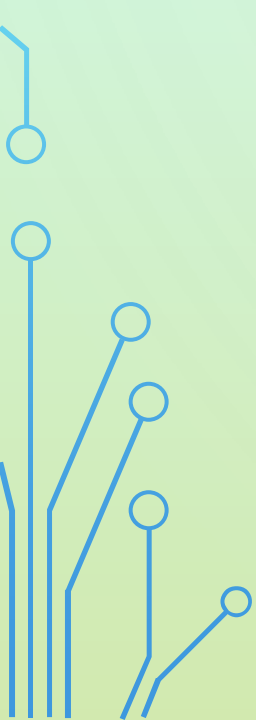AUTUMN 2021

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#ASKTHEAWKWARD

#AskTheAwkward aims to help parents and carers have regular conversations with their children about online relationships and more. The resource includes three short films created in a social experiment style, with real parents and their children to capture their reactions to a range of questions.

Being online is an important part of how young people 'do' relationships. Young people are using online spaces for their social and romantic lives. Young people want their parents and carers to talk with them more about this. We know that these topics aren't always easy to talk about, so #AskTheAwkward has been created to help you to explore online relationships with your secondary aged children, making these conversations part of everyday life.

TEACHING E SAFETY

E-Safety has been a hot topic for our students as we have started the year, especially our year 7s as we introduce them to our computer systems and how to use them. All students are expected to sign our acceptable use agreement, which may seem like a lot of rules and regulations but in our discussions during lessons, our students have shown a real understanding of how the rules are designed to protect them. Many of the students were able to get to grips with the fact that even though technology can be a fantastic resource, we need to protect the systems that we use and protect ourselves from potential threats. Students were quick to point out that without the rule of law, one of our key British Values, then we would soon descend into chaos. We have pointed out to our new students that if they have any concerns that resources are not being used properly or that if they are receiving any inappropriate or bullying messages, then they have easy access to a 'Report Bullying' button on our school website. A quick survey during lessons demonstrated that many of our students are the owner of a mobile phone and as the term goes on, we will spend time looking at how students can use these safely and responsibly to leave a positive digital footprint.

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos much in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity to become the iOS store's most downloaded app with over 33 million downloads. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1billion monthly active users worldwide.

AGE RESTRICTION

12+

If under 18, supervision of a parent or legal guardian required.

What parents need to know about

TIKTOK

18+

MATURE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up for the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are lighthearted or funny takes on dance routines which are designed to make people laugh. However there has been a slew of videos which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content, including young teens dressing overtly sexually and behaving suggestively. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be quite common to come across explicit content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.

INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.

TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities – social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorious have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.

ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into 45-minute visit.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

TALK ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use the app, make sure you also take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have a dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour for them. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding of them. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media superstardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.

ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.

EXPLORE AND LEARN YOURSELF

Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with TikTok. You could then even use the app with your child and watch some videos with them. If you are the parent of a teen, even if it does not make you popular, keep a close eye on what they're viewing and sharing. That said, it's a brilliant chance to turn it into a bonding opportunity with your child also. You could even unleash your inner performer and make videos with them while (more importantly) keeping them safe online.

LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a safe space for your child to express themselves. However, just in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.

SAFEGUARDING

What is a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

DBS checks (previously known as CRB checks) The Disclosure and Barring Service helps employers make safer recruitment decisions each year by processing and issuing DBS checks for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. DBS also maintains the adults' and children's Barred Lists and makes considered decisions as to whether an individual should be included on one or both of these lists and barred from engaging in regulated activity.

St John Henry Newman Catholic School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. All staff undergo an enhanced check with barred list(s) with references checked before their start date. All staff undergo safeguarding training is part of their induction with regular updates and refresher training as and when required.

If you would like further information on how we safeguard at our school, the following policies are available by visiting our school website at: https://www.newman.cumbria.sch.uk/parents/documents-policies

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Child on Child Abuse Policy and Procedures

Code of Conduct

E-Safety

Online E-Safety Policy

Overarching Safeguarding Statement

Safe Recruitment Policy

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INSTAGRAM

Instagram adopts an age restriction of at least 13 for young people to create new accounts and have recently made changes to how under 16s accounts are managed. These features have been introduced to prevent unwanted followers and messages from strangers. When a child under 16 signs up for an Instagram account, they will now be automatically set to private and will have to actively take steps in order to switch their account to public. This is not a fixed feature as accounts can be switched to public at any time and established accounts that are already public will not be automatically transferred to private. Despite this, existing accounts of under 16s that are set as public will receive a notification promoting the benefits of private accounts.

This has been done to help keep children and young people safe online whilst allowing them to continue in experiencing the benefits of social media. This new update is a positive step forward in encouraging children under 16 to think critically about who they engage with online. A private account can allow younger children to experience social media with a sense of control but with the added layer of comfort of knowing that followers can be limited to known friends and family.

It is important to note though that these updates are not a guaranteed method of preventing harm online. If you are concerned about young people accepting strangers as followers, then it is good to talk to them about the risks associated with interacting with people online so they can go on to develop their own critical thinking skills and determine what is the right approach. It also encourages them to come forward if issues arise and gives them confidence when navigating the internet freely.

Home Internet e-safety

Most broadband providers include parental controls for free as part of their broadband package so any device that connects to your Wi-Fi will be protected by any controls you have set up. Remember, children may have devices that use 3G or 4G so they won't always be connected to your home internet so ensure you set up parental controls on their devices too.

Sky

Sky Broadband Shield is included within your Sky Broadband package and helps to protect against phishing and malware-infected sites. It also includes Safe Search which is designed to block explicit content when you search online. Your Sky Broadband Shield will automatically be set as suitable for teenagers during the day and adults in the evening. You can change this to suit your family:

1. **Choose a rating**: You can choose between PG, 13, 18 or customise your protection.
2. **Watershed:** This feature allows you to set age rating restrictions depending on the time of day.
3. **Block content:** You can block specific websites.

Find out more here: https://www.sky.com/help/diagnostics/sky-broadband-shield/sky-broadband-shield

Virgin Media

Web Safe is included within your Virgin Media broadband package to help protect any device that is connected to your Wi-Fi. You can customise your settings, for example block access to known fraudulent websites or those that aren't suitable for children.

Virgin Media also offers an additional security tool called F-Secure SAFE which can be installed on up to five devices such as mobile phones, tablets, PCs and Macs. This offers anti-virus protection to these devices as well as parental controls both in and out of the home.

Find out more here:
https://www.virginmedia.com/shop/broadband/parental-control.html

BT

BT include parental controls within their broadband package. Once activated, all devices connected to your BT Home Hub will have content filtered to your set filter level. There are three predefined filter levels (strict, moderate and light) available or you can customise your protection. BT also offer the following functionality:

- Set 'Always allow' specific sites
- Set 'Always block' sites that you feel are inappropriate such as YouTube.
- Set up homework time
- Set a time for filters to be on/off

Find out more here:
https://www.bt.com/help/security/parental-controls/how-to-keep-your-family-safe-online-with-bt-parental-controls-an#settingup

TalkTalk

HomeSafe is included within your TalkTalk Broadband package to allow you to filter your internet to keep your family safe. You can choose the type of websites to block automatically.

Find out more here:
https://www.talktalk.co.uk/shop/security/ homesafe

Vodafone

Vodafone Secure Net is included within your Vodafone Broadband package and helps to protect against harmful websites and viruses. You can also block inappropriate websites on your child's device and restrict mobile use to certain times of the day.

Find out more here:
https://securenet.vodafone.co.uk

USEFUL LINKS

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Or contact us at school if you have any questions