E-Safety – a Guide for Parents and Guardians

BACKGROUND

E-safety stands for 'electronic safety' and encompasses all internet technologies and electronic communications that children and young people may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise e-safety issues or pose risks to their wellbeing and safety.

New technologies and the 'online world' open up many exciting benefits and opportunities for children and young people; in terms of exploring, developing and communicating. However, they can also present some risks. Technology is becoming all pervasive and touching all areas of society. With children and young people having increasing access to personal technology, it is crucial that parents and guardians have the knowledge to encourage their children to use online resources and new technologies effectively and responsibly and, above all, to ensure that their children stay safe

THE GENERATIONAL DIVIDE

Part of the challenge for many adults is that, while they want to protect their children from harm or the risk of harm, they may lack the full understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the way that children and young people might be using the online space. It could be that some parents lack confidence and are unaware of the tools available to keep their children safe online.

The purpose of this guide is to inform parents and guardians and point them in the direction of the resources available in order to enter the world of 'online parenting'.

ADVICE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) provides an excellent, fully comprehensive and up-to-date 'ThinkUKnow' resource for the parents and guardians of both primary and secondary school children.

Advice if your children are in
Primary Education

Advice if your children are in
Secondary Education

The ThinkUKNow website provides essential guidance for parents and guardians in terms of:

What is my child doing online?

➢ **Socialising, Communicating and Sharing** – using social networking sites, such as Facebook, to create a network of online friends and using the internet to chat to friends through various mediums such as emailing, instant messaging, webcam and chat rooms. Communicating online can feel different to chatting in real life and young people may often share more online, including personal information and photographs, than they would in real life.

➢ **Searching** – the internet can provide an invaluable tool for exploring, researching and aiding study. However, there is also the potential for children and young people to actively search for or to come across material that is inappropriate for their age. Additionally, not all information found online is accurate and young people need to be made aware of the need to cross-check information and to think critically about the site that they are using.

➢ **Gaming** – the world of computer games has also changed, in that young people can now enter online worlds and compete against friends that they make online.

➢ **Using a mobile phone** – talking to people is now only a small part of what mobile phones can do, as most phones can now be used to provide the same functions as computers.

How do I talk to my child about what they're doing online?

CEOP suggests a number of ways in which parents and guardians can keep up-to-date with what their children are doing online and can, therefore, ensure children are taught the basics of online safety. As well as setting boundaries for online use, CEOP also suggests letting children and young people 'teach' their parents by showing them what they do online and how they use the internet. Another suggested approach is for parents and children to watch the ThinkUKnow film clips together and to discuss the topics raised.

Risks your child may face online

➢ **Cyberbullying** – a form of online bullying that can be relentless, due to the 24-hour nature of online technologies. According to CEOP, 28% of 11 to 16 year olds have been deliberately targeted, threatened or humiliated by an individual or group through the use of mobile phone or the internet. The ease with which photos and videos can be shared online, is a potential aid to cyber bullying.

➢ **Grooming** – a process of manipulating a young person to gain control over them and to engage them in sexual acts, either over the internet or in person.

➢ **Inappropriate websites** – some of the content available online may be inappropriate and therefore upsetting, particularly for young internet users.

➢ **Online Reputations** – it is important for young people to remember that any thoughts, pictures or other content that they have posted online could be accessed by universities, employers and friends.

➤ **Overuse** – the 24-hour nature of the online world, including gaming, can encourage overuse. This can negatively impact upon school work, relationships, sleep and behaviour.

What tools are there to help me keep my child safe?

➤ **Technical Tools** – privacy settings and parental controls are widely available and are often free via internet providers.
➤ **Reporting Tools** – CEOP provides advice and details of the sources available for reporting inappropriate online content.
➤ **Education Tools** – as mentioned above, the ThinkUKnow film clips provide an excellent educational resource on the subject of internet safety.

E-SAFETY AT KING'S ELY

King's Ely seeks to embrace all the benefits that technology and the internet provides for the education of its students and encourages the use of any such appropriate aids in study. However, King's has a duty of care to ensure that students are able to use ICT, including the internet and related communication technologies, appropriately and safely. The school's policy E-Safety and the Use of ICT, Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices is available on the school's website and sets out guidelines for use and sanctions for misuse. The E-Safety policy also refers to the serious issue of cyber-bullying, as does the school's Anti-Bullying – Social Respect Policy.

OTHER RESOURCES

As well as the ThinkUKnow website, there are other resources that parents and guardians may find useful when considering the subject of E-Safety:

➤ http://www.getsafeonline.org/ - a national awareness and information site sponsored by the government focusing on internet safety.

➤ http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/ - an award winning practical internet safety programme website for schools, young people, parents and agencies, produced by the children's internet charity Childnet International.

➤ http://chatdanger.com/ - covers staying safe when chatting on a range of platforms.

➤ http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/cyberbullying.aspx - advice and support from Childline concerning Cyberbullying.