

Dear parents/carers,

As from next Monday 23rd March, when we have to close our academy to many of our children, they will be spending a lot more of their time using the internet, both to play online games, as well as complete suggested work set by their teachers on Active Learn and other websites.

Staying safe online is obviously of paramount importance. As part of our PSHE lessons over the course of the year, all year groups have been talking to pupils about how to stay safe whilst using the internet and ensuring they know what to do if they are unhappy or uncomfortable with anything they access online.

Through these lessons and discussions, it has come to our attention that a number of pupils are using social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. We would just like to remind parents that all of these websites state that the minimum age children should set up an account is 13. Due to this, the content that children are accessing on these sites may not always be suitable and can be difficult to filter.

Below are some useful links that parents could use when talking to your children about staying safe online:

CyberSense is an E-safety app designed to help parents talk about e-safety issues with their children to ensure that they make smart choices to stay safe online. Aimed at children aged between 8 -10, it will help them think about what they would do if they were faced with different situations online; from cyberbullying to sharing content with someone they do not know. You can find out more about Cyber Sense at www.internetmatters.org.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety have produced a guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media. It includes information about the potential risks of using social media sites as well as ways parents and carers can discuss this with their children. It also includes links to other useful internet safety sites. The guide can be accessed via our new website; simply click the 'Parents' button on the homepage and go to the 'Safeguarding Children' section.

The Online Safety Agency (www.onlinesafety.org.uk) website has information and resources aimed at helping parents and carers gain a greater understanding of what content children may be accessing online. There is lots of useful information about what games or websites are age appropriate for children.

We hope that these links will be useful and that you will take the opportunity to talk to your children about how they use the internet as safely as possible. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr MacDonald
Assistant Principal