

ABBOTSWELD'S SAFETY INTERNET DAY



On Tuesday 10th February, Abbotsweld will join schools across the country in marking Safer Internet Day. This annual event aims to support both children and their families in navigating the online world.

Whilst the theme of safe online conduct is a running thread in school life, each class will place a particular emphasis on appropriate online behaviour through age-appropriate lessons on the day. By fostering an environment where online safety is a priority, we not only protect our children but also build a culture of awareness and responsibility within our school community. It is vital that we work together to ensure our children are not only safe but also equipped to thrive in the digital age.

As always, if you have any questions or need advice on any concerns you have about your child's online presence, please contact your child's class teacher.

HAVE A CONVERSATION

Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.

What games do you and your friends like to play online? Can you show me the websites you visit the most? Shall we play your favourite game online together?

Ask them about how they stay safe online.

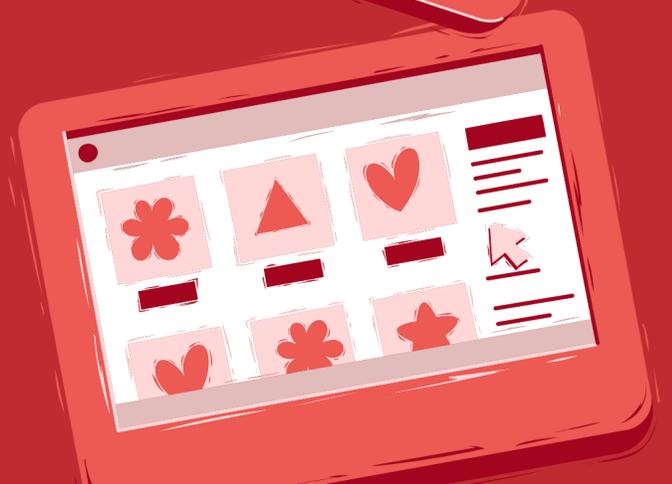
What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?

Ask them if they know where to go for help.

Where can they go to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use?

Think about how you each use the internet.

What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities that you could enjoy as a family?



SCREEN TIME – BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

THINK ABOUT QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Research has found that there is no perfect amount of screen time. The right amount of screen time will be different for everyone, and will depend on your family's lifestyle. Instead, it is useful to think about screen time in terms of quality over quantity. Children might be enjoying a wide range of activities on their devices, like homework, online games, or socialising with friends. These positive uses of technology can really support young people's wellbeing. However, screen time should not replace sleeping, eating, exercise, or get in the way of hobbies that children already enjoy, and it's important for parents and carers to put practices in place to prevent this from happening, whether that's utilising screen time apps or updating screen time settings, found within platforms.

TALK ABOUT WARNING SIGNS

There are lots of ways to tell if you have been looking at a screen for too long. It could be sore eyes, a headache, feeling sleepy or restless, or needing to stretch. These signs will be different for everyone, and it is good to talk to your children about these signs, to help them to recognise their own warning signs.

Allowing them to recognise these signs can help your children to start managing their screen time habits, themselves

CREATE, REVIEW AND ADAPT EXPECTATIONS

Create expectations around screen time and use of technology together. Discuss how long you each think you should be spending on your devices, what limits you can put in place, and how you can help each other stick to those limits. You could use Childnet's Family Agreement to talk about and set expectations. Once you have decided on what expectations and limits work for your family, set a date to review and adapt them as your children get older.

EXPLORE AND USE WELLBEING SETTINGS

Lots of apps and devices now have wellbeing settings to support children and young people with having a healthy balance of time online and offline. This could be screen time limits, the need for passcodes, 'family pairing' features 'do not disturb' functions, or disabling autoplay on apps like YouTube and Netflix.

PARENTAL CONTROLS- PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE CONTENT.

DECIDE WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY

Creating a family agreement allows you to have conversations about setting boundaries. It's important that you involve yourself in your child's online world, so as a simple starting point you could ask them what their favourite websites or games are, and why they like them. The filtering options that you put in place may also change over time, as your children get older and more independent, and their technology use changes too.



CHECK YOUR SETTINGS REGULARLY

Children can become accomplished users of technology and may learn how to disable or bypass the parental controls in place.

Therefore, it's important to talk to your children from the outset about why the settings are there, and the importance of respecting them.

Regularly checking the filtering on your family's devices could also form part of your agreement.

ESTABLISH SOME RULES

If you have parental controls from your internet provider on your home WiFi, these will not cover the use of 3G, 4G or 5G at home. Similarly, if your child goes to a friend's house where there are no controls in place, they may be able to access unrestricted content. For these reasons, it's important to educate your child about the potential risks online and establish rules concerning the sites that are suitable or inappropriate to visit.

EXPLORE AND USE WELLBEING SETTINGS

No parental controls or filtering options are guaranteed to be 100% effective. They are a very useful tool to improve the quality of online experiences, but they cannot offer a 'complete' solution. It is therefore essential to talk with your children about their online activities, so they know what to do if they encounter inappropriate content.