TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to the first parent learning newsletter of the academic year 2022-2023 where we seek to share some of the initiatives and strategies we use in school so you might best support your child in their education.

Curriculum

'The curriculum' is broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. This includes the planned sequence of instruction in each subject and the extra breadth added through trips and visits, external speakers, etc.

All subjects plan their curriculum to map out a learning journey for your child and these are shared with children at appropriate points throughout their course of study.

You might find it useful to look at the topics being studied and the order they're delivered in so you can engage your child in discussion about their learning.

You can find the full details of each subject's curriculum intent and how they implement that on our website at:

www.priory.lancs.sch.uk/curriculum

Teams for homework

We use Microsoft Teams for communication in school, with pupils, for online learning and to set homework.

Homework is set via Teams 'Assignments' and children are expected to check their Teams accounts regularly for communication about their homework assignments.

Teachers can add attachments and pupils are able to upload and 'hand in' their work to teachers in the same system.
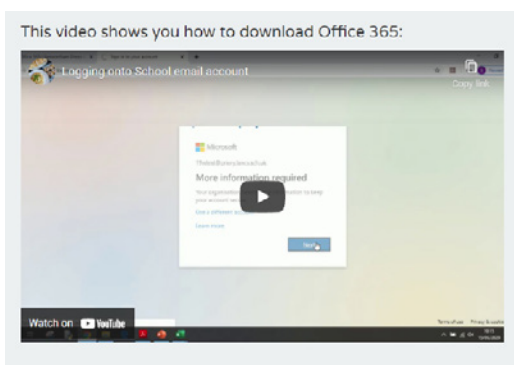
Pupils are given guidance about this during their lessons.

You can read our homework policy here:

www.priory.lancs.sch.uk/parents/homework

If your child hasn't yet set up their Office 365 Teams account, there are help guides on the website at:

www.priory.lancs.sch.uk/pupils/office-365

This video shows you how to download Office 365:

Online Safety in Schools: A Parent's Guide

At school, we are continually educating our pupils about online safety and how they can continue to keep themselves safe online whether this be on their phone, laptop or any other device. We offer this guidance to support you in how to approach this topic with your child.

Whilst your child is at school, our school network monitors pupils' behaviours to ensure that they continue to be safe. Our 'Smoothwall Safeguarding' school IT system is constantly in place ensuring our pupils are safe and secure when online using our school devices and network. Along with this and within our Learning for Life and PSHE curriculum, staff continue to educate and discuss with pupils the importance of keeping safe whilst online. They are signposted to advice, guidance, resources and constantly reminded to think about their behaviours when online.

At Priory, our staff will only ever communicate online to pupils using their school email address or through Microsoft Teams. With regards to online learning, our pupils use packages such as Seneca in Science and English, and Sparx in Maths.

For a list of platforms used by other departments, please visit our website at>>

www.priory.lancs.sch.uk/pupils/online-learning-platforms

Online Safety in Our Childs' Lives

For many of us, we see our online lives and offline lives as different, but children are growing up with technology and for them with the internet there isn't a difference; online life and offline life is just life. Technology can move at an extraordinarily fast pace and it can be difficult to know how to start talking to your child about what they're doing online, who they might be speaking to or discussing the potential risks and issues.

What can you do to help your child?

Talking regularly with your child is the greatest tool to help keep them safe online. Talking regularly and making it part of daily conversation, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed. It also means when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you. But it can also be easy to become overwhelmed with the different technology, the language that children use, the huge number of games and apps which are available, and the potential risks. Remind them never to share private or personal information. Use examples, such as "you shouldn't give your number to a stranger on the street. Is someone online you don't know any different?"

Tackling Difficult Conversations

Some conversations are going to be more difficult than others, but it's so important to have these open and honest conversations, so you can help your child with any worries or issues they might be facing online. Sometimes, more difficult conversations will heighten feelings of fear, anxiety, worry, shame and embarrassment.

What can you do to help?

- As with any conversation, it is important that we try to stay calm, balanced and non-judgemental.

- If it's something that has made you angry, fearful or concerned, don't tackle it straight away if possible. Those feelings affect the way we talk. Take a little time and, if possible, talk to someone else about it.

- Your child's school can be a great source of information, particularly their form teacher, head of year or Mrs Crank and Mrs Holland who are the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) - you can always contact them for advice.

- Keep listening, try not to interrupt even if there is a period of silence. They may be thinking how they word something.

Be smart on the internet

- can you turn features off, such as chat and in-app purchases?
- do they know what personal and private information is, and what is and is not appropriate to share online?
- what are their profiles on their games and apps? What does the profile say about them? What does the image or avatar say about them?

How can a child feel about being online?

For children, online life is life. It can help to think about how your child could feel sharing what they're doing online before you talk to them. There could be a range of different emotions, such as:

- discomfort or embarrassment about something they have said online
- shame or fear if they're worried about something they have seen or done
- annoyance or confusion if they don't understand something

What more can we do to keep them safe?

Having a conversation with your child can give you a good insight into their online activities so that you can consider:

- are further options, such as parental controls, required? Have you checked these recently?
- are the games and apps they're using appropriate to their age? Have a conversation and agree some rules with your child about what games and apps they're allowed to use. While there are risks with most online platforms, we'd recommend only letting your child use apps that have privacy settings and a 'report and block' feature.
- do they know about the safety and privacy features of the apps they're using? Such as:
  - privacy settings. Are their accounts public or private?
  - do they know how to block and report? Are those features available?

Who can my child go to at Priory about Online Safety?

Our Online Safety Lead is Mrs Donna Crank (Assistant Principal / Lead DSL), but pupils can speak to any member of staff at Priory about any questions or concerns they may have.

What if I am worried about something a child or young person may have experienced online?

You can contact the NSPCC helpline for free support and advice. Call them on

0808 800 5000

or you can contact them online. Children can contact Childline any time to get support themselves.

Where can I go for further information on Online Safety?

Please see the NSPCC Online Safety tips leaflet and for further information you can go to

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

Online safety information for families and children with SEND can be found at

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-families-children-with-send/

Let's keep kids safe online