

November 2024 Online Safety Update

This Month's Online Safety Theme: Social Media and Mental Health

As you might know, 10th October was International Mental Health Day. There is considerable evidence indicating that social media can negatively affect young people's mental health, particularly among girls and young women. This can be attributed to various factors, such as comparing oneself to the images and updates of others, the pressure to conform to certain standards of appearance, and the overwhelming amount of information they encounter.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are not exempt from these challenges, whether they are using social media independently or with parental guidance. Despite the concerns, social media has many positive aspects; it can be a valuable tool for reducing feelings of isolation and helping our children stay connected with friends and family. Some studies even suggest that within safety boundaries, regular gaming with friends may reduce the risk of depression for young boys.

Top Tips:

- Limit your child's online time using apps and features like 'App Limits,' which can be found in the Settings on an iPhone, for example. According to one parent at The Meadows, an old-school egg timer can also work well as your child can watch the time passing and prepare to finish.
- Ensure your child takes regular eye and movement breaks - and to bring them back to reality.
- Establish a rule that devices cannot be kept in bedrooms overnight, ensuring your child gets a break from social media.
- Collaborate with your child to identify what types of content make them feel good and assist them in following more of that!

As always, if you have any concerns regarding your child's online safety or any other safeguarding issues, please feel free to reach out to the pastoral team at 0121 569 7080.

