ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER
FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Hi Parents,

Welcome to our second online safely newsletter.

As we come to the end of term its worth remembering that the Internet can be a risky place. Children should access social media once they understand the dangers and how to use the websites safely. Ofcom reminds us of the five things that can go wrong. There is too much information on social networks. People can use them to locate a child, find out their interests, and some may use this information to bully or groom them. There is a digital footprint left by anyone that uses social media as well. Things posted are difficult to delete as others can copy or share them.

It's also easy to lie online. Some people set up fake profiles and can even pretend to be a different age or gender. Not everything is positive. Bullies use these platforms to say nasty things to others and post embarrassing pictures. Lastly, anyone can post videos, pictures and ideas whether they are nice or nasty. This means that children might see things that are too young to comprehend.

By having an awareness of these risks you can keep one step ahead.

Log-in Account Advice

It's good practice to have an account for each family member on a desktop or laptop computer. Each account should have a strong password consisting of letters numbers and symbols. Microsoft Windows allows you to set up standard accounts for family members. In this way only a select few adults are administrators. This allows you to keep control of computer settings so that you know what software is being installed. Don't forget to log out of the computer when you have finished using it or lock it when you have to walk away. You can do this by pressing the Windows Logo + L .
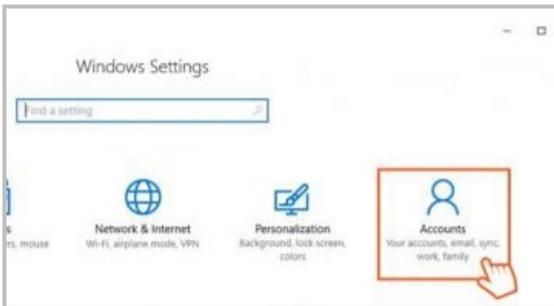
Family Safety

Windows and Apple computers allow you to add settings to your child's logon account. There are settings to help you limit the time that children can be logged in and also the time spent on certain programs including games that they have. You can even block certain content. Do forget also that you can contact your internet service provider to see what child safety measures they offer.

Favourites and History

Your computer will contain two or three internet browsers such as Safari, Chrome, Firefox, Edge and Internet Explorer. Children will use these to surf the Internet and will likely Favourite or Bookmark websites that they like for quick access. These programs contain a history feature. The history stores the websites that they have been to (unless they have switched to private browsing or incognito mode). If your child has cleared their history out or used one of these features to stop the browser from logging where they have been, then it may be a sign that they don't want you to know what they have been looking at. Be aware that children may switch between these browsers.
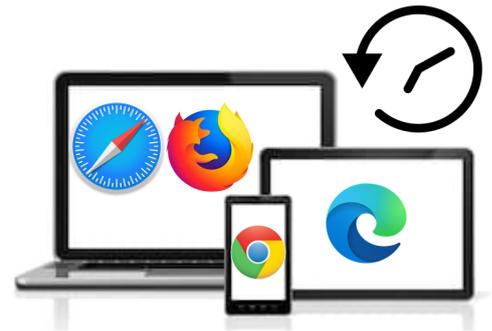
Did you know?

All mobile phone providers offer free parental control services which limit the content children can access via the Internet to content suitable for under 18s. However, they may not always be automatically switched on. Check with your service provider that the parental control settings are switched on, and ask for them to be switched on if they are not. You should be able to do this via your account setting on your provider's website.

72% of 12-15 year olds had a social network profile in 2016. Yet children should only be able to access social media once they understand the dangers.

Popular sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter require a minimum age of 13, yet we have found that over half of British 9-12 year olds already have a Facebook account.

The sheer amount of information available through social networks can put children into difficult situations.

At St Michaels we know that no filter or protection is 100% accurate. Nonetheless all these tools in home and at school can help provide an encompassing approach to safety. So make sure that you keep abreast of these approaches. Technology changes over time.