

Internet Safety Week

Technology is a wonderful thing. But sometimes, particularly in the case of young children, it pays to keep an eye on how much influence technology has on their lives.

Recent research suggests the need for a better balance of screen time, which is why many companies, including Apple and Google, have introduced numerous ways to monitor how much time your loved ones are spending on smart devices.

During these unprecedented times, children are no doubt using the Internet more than ever. With this in mind, Google has brought out Family Link, which at a basic level, offers usage controls. It allows you - whether your children are younger or in their teens - to set digital ground rules to help guide them as they learn, play, and explore online. You can set a 'bedtime', limit the time per day spent on the phone, remotely lock devices when it's time to take a break and track their device if it is connected to the internet.

If you're a parent of children that use phones or compatible devices, we recommend giving Family Link a go, especially if you've struggled with managing multiple family devices in the past. More information and how to download Family Link can be found here:

<https://families.google.com/familylink>

Social media (all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life, and as a school, we accept that many parents, staff and pupils will use it. However, as stated in the acceptable use policy which all members of the school community sign, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with the school and each other on social media, in the same way as they would face to face. Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16+). We ask parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use. It is worth noting that online harms regulation is likely to require more stringent age verification measures over the coming years.

However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality in order to best help our pupils/students to avoid or cope with issues if they arise. Online safety lessons at school will look at social media and other online behaviour, how to be a good friend online and how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation or abuse.

Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use (you don't need to know them – ask your child to explain it to you), with whom, for how long and when. Bearing in mind, that late at night or in bedrooms is not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day. You may wish to refer to the [Top Tips for Parents](#) poster along with relevant items from

parentsafe.lgfl.net and the [Children's Commission Digital 5 A Day](#)

Another fantastic page is <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> where you can type in an APP or game your child may play and it gives you a description and safety rating.