SPRING 2025 |
PARENTS/CARERS

ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER.

SAFER INTERNET DAY - 2025

The annual Safer Internet Day is on **Tuesday, February 11th**. This year's theme is **'Too good to be true? Keeping yourself and others safe from scams online.'**

Internet Matters has created **Can you find the fake online?** an interactive game, that can be played at home to support recognition of fake information. You can select an age-appropriate quiz (under 11s, 11-13s, 14+) to play as a family (parents/carers versus children) to learn and test your knowledge on what fake news, disinformation and misinformation is and how to stop it from spreading.

You can access the game HERE

GUIDES AND TOOLKITS

There are some excellent guides and toolkits being produced for parents/carers on a whole host of areas of online safety and digital safeguarding. These are being highlighted as particularly useful:

Second hand phones and devices - Learn how to make the most of older devices to help children learn responsibility and find guidance on steps to take to keep them safe.

My Family's Digital Toolkit - A free personalised resource which gives age-specific advice, advice to deal with specific concerns, recommendations for digital tools to support children's interests and more.

WHAT IS 'DOOMSCROLLING'? ONLINE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Internet Matters have published a useful article for parents and carers focussing on **doomscrolling**. This term refers to the habit of continuously scrolling through negative news online, which can significantly impact both mental and physical health. The article provides valuable insights for parents on how to recognise if their child is doomscrolling and offers practical tips to help prevent this behaviour. Understanding and addressing doomscrolling is crucial in promoting a healthier online experience for our children.

You can read the full guide HERE.

INSTAGRAM TEEN ACCOUNTS

Meta and Instagram have announced new measures they are putting in place to protect teen users. "Teen Accounts: Built-In Protections for Teens, Peace of Mind for Parents. Meta states that any new accounts created by users 13-16 will automatically be put into a more restricted teen account which has built in protections which are:

- **Private accounts** - new accounts default to private. This applies to all teens under 16 (including those already using Instagram) and teens under 18 who sign up for a new account. However, currently this relies on users being truthful with their age. Instagram state they will be testing new technology with U.S. users at some point next year which will estimate age.
- **Sensitive content restrictions** - teen accounts will be placed into the most restrictive 'sensitive content control' setting.
- **Limited interactions** - users can only be tagged or mentioned by people they follow. Offensive words and phrases will be filtered out of comments and DM's (private messages).
- **Time limit reminders** - users will get notifications telling them to leave the app after 60 minutes each day.
- **Sleep mode** - Notifications will be muted between 2200 and 0700.

These settings can be turned off/on but users (16 and below) will have to set up **parental supervision** and those parents have to approve the changes. New features within parent supervision includes ways to see who their children are talking to (but not the content of those messages), setting daily time limits, blocking specific time periods and see topics that children are looking at.

This link explains these new features HERE.

ROBLOX MAJOR SAFETY UPDATES.

In November 2024 Roblox, the game used by 90 million people daily, announced some major updates which are available to users and parents. The rollout has already started and will be fully implemented by March 2025. These safety updates include:

- Limits to how children under 13 can communicate.
- Parental controls accessible from the parents phone rather from the child's device (remote management).

To see an explanation of all the new features visit the Roblox website HERE.

You can also see the full guide to Roblox parental controls on the Internet Matters website HERE.

DIGITAL LITERACY GUIDE - INHOPE

Funded by the European Union, InHope have released a new Digital Literacy Guide which is aimed primarily at teenagers, but may also be useful for parents and carers

The guide is a free download (no sign-up required) and goes into lots of areas such as "Know your Device", "Interacting Online", "Seeking Help" and more.

You can find the guide HERE.

The information in the newsletter is given to help promote the safety of children and young people online.

Every care has been taken to ensure the information and any recommendations in the newsletter are accurate at the time of publishing. Schools must make their own judgements when sharing our recommendations with parents and carers and, where appropriate, always risk assess with their pupils and whole school community in mind.

This newsletter is brought to you by the HFL Education Wellbeing team as part of their online safety support for schools and settings in Hertfordshire. Contact the team at wellbeing@hfleducation.org or call 01438 544464.

HFL Education is a leading national provider of school improvement and business support services, training, and resources, which enable schools, educational settings, and multi-academy trusts to deliver a great education.

We support those we work with to achieve successful long-term outcomes for their children.

We believe that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live, their background or circumstances.