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SafeguardED

New devices for Christmas? How to keep children safe

Some of our pupils may have been lucky enough to receive new devices, games consoles and phones for Christmas. Most others will have access to an internet-enabled device, in one way or another. We want to ensure that everyone in our school community is safe online.

We encourage the positive use of technology at school and often talk about the fun of going online, but we also discuss the scary things that can happen too. So, if your child has received a new device or will be accessing a shared/existing device, have a think about the following, ideally **before** they access the device/s:

- Have you set up parental controls on your broadband connection to limit access to inappropriate content?
- Have you set up parental controls on the actual device (phone/tablet/laptop/watch etc.)? Please don't assume these will automatically be in place.
- Have you set up controls on the apps/games your child is going to access? Please don't assume these will automatically be in place.
- Have you spoken to your child about any agreed boundaries? E.g. time limits, what sites/apps/games to access (or not), where to leave devices at night, screen-free times of the day etc.
- Have you spoken to your child about what they do online, so you can better understand their online activity and any potential risks, and help them accordingly?
- Have you spoken regularly to your child about what they can do if they see anything online that worries or upsets them?
- If your child uses any social media:
 - Have you spoken about how people usually only post the best bits of their life, and how a reel is not an accurate reflection of life?
 - Sometimes people post things that are untrue or misleading to get more clicks and generate more income (e.g. through advertising). Encourage your child to think about who the poster is, what is known about them and what may be their intent for posting.
 - A lot of social media now includes AI chat bots, and many children use these. Remind your child that these can sometimes provide misleading and unhelpful responses.
 - Reassure your child that they can talk to you if they are unsure or worried about anything they see.
- Are the games, TV series and films (including on Netflix/Disney+/AppleTV etc.) that your child will access, appropriate for their age? All of these have age ratings linked to their content, not their difficulty. Common Sense Media ([commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org)) can help you to know which games/apps/TV programmes are appropriate for your child.

If you need support with any of the above, have a look at parentsafe.lgfl.net for lots of advice and support, including advice about parental controls.

Remember, many children experience harm online as a result of being naturally curious or sociable, or as a result of what other people do or say to them. Consequently, all children can be at risk, and so it is important that we are proactive about the above safety tips for all children.

If you need support in setting up parental controls on your devices please let the office know so a member of staff can help with this.

