



Sheldwich Primary School Little Hedgehogs Pre-School



12th May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Sheldwich Primary School. Online Safety is taught to all pupils and our curriculum empowers pupils to understand and be aware how they can stay safe and behave appropriately online but we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you.

Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep themselves safe and behave appropriately online. It's important that we are all vigilant when children are using the internet and act to ensure they are protected from people who may pose a risk to them. Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to illegal, unwanted or unpleasant content, comments or activity online and there are steps you can take at home to minimize this risk.

What can parents/carers do to help children keep safe online?

Ground Rules

- Discuss together as a family how the internet will be used in your house. Consider what information should be kept private (such as personal information, photos in school uniform etc). Ensure your children know the risks of accepting friends' requests from strangers online and make sure you know what your child is doing online much like you would offline.
- Discuss using strong passwords with your child so they understand how they can protect their online accounts and talk about keeping passwords safe e.g. not sharing them with anyone or using the same password for several accounts. If your child's account is 'hacked' or compromised then make sure they change their password and report any concerns or suspicious activity. For more advice on using strong passwords visit <https://www.getsafeonline.org/protecting-your-computer/passwords/>
- Consider locating your child's computers and laptops in a family area but be aware that children access the internet on mobile phones, games consoles and tablets so use can't always be supervised.
- Be especially aware of setting rules relating to your child's use of webcams and any applications or devices which allow voice or video chat.

Online Safety

- Install antivirus software, secure your internet connection and use 'Parental Control' functions for computers, mobile phones and games consoles to block unsuitable content or contact from unknown people. Research different parental control software and tools available for your home and select the tools which are most suitable to you, your child and the technology in your home. Visit sites such as www.internetmatters.org, www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide and www.getsafeonline.org for safety information and advice about parental controls on consoles and devices and how to report concerns.
- Make sure you read any parental guidance and safety recommendations (including age requirements – most popular social networking sites and apps are only for users aged 13+, 16+ or 18+) for any apps or websites before allowing your child to use them - visit www.net-aware.org.uk

Instagram – an online mobile photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service which enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. You are required to be **at least 13 years old** before you can create an account.

Facebook – a social networking site. You are required to be **at least 13 years old** before you can create an account.

Whats App – an instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be **age 16 or older**.

TicTok – TikTok is a music video based social media app. TikToc requires that users be **at least 13 years old**. Anyone under the age of 18yrs old must have approval of a parent or guardian to access the app.

Gaming

While most games are suitable for players of all ages, others are only suitable for older children or adults. PEGI age ratings (<https://pegi.info/>) can help you make informed decisions when buying games as a PEGI rating considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.

Mario Kart 3+

Lego (Series) 7+

Pokémon (Series) 7+

Fortnite 12+

Always remember that parental control tools are not always 100% effective and sometimes unsuitable content can get past them, so don't rely on them alone to protect your child.

Listen

- Take an active interest in your child's life online and talk openly with them about the things they do. Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together with your child can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.
- To start a conversation with your child you could tell them that you understand that some young people share images and videos online and that you're interested to know what they think about it and how they think they can keep themselves safe.

Dialogue – keep talking

- Ensure that your child knows that once a picture, video or comment is sent or posted online, then it can be very difficult to remove as other people can forward it and share it with others, without them even knowing.
- www.childnet.com and www.thinkuknow.co.uk has some really useful tips and ideas for parents/carers about starting conversations regarding online safety.
- Always ensure your child knows how to report and block people online who may send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply to cyberbullying and to keep any evidence.
- Make sure your child knows it's important that they tell an adult they trust, if anything happens online that makes them feel *scared, worried or uncomfortable*.

Remember, the internet is an essential part of young people's lives and provides them with tremendous opportunities. The vast majority use it without coming to any harm so it's essential to be

realistic: banning the internet or web sites often will not work and it can make a child feel less able to report a problem or concern, so education around safe use is essential.

Websites to visit for more information:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the “Parent/Carer” Section and use the “Click CEOP” button to seek advice and report online abuse

www.childnet.com – Visit the ‘Know it All’ Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date security advice including using complex passwords and managing hacked accounts

www.internetmatters.org – Information from the four largest internet service providers (BT, Sky, Talk Talk and Virgin)

www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety – NSPCC has linked up with 02 to provide information for parents about popular social media sites, apps and games.

www.saferinternet.org.uk – Parents guides to safety tools on popular devices and signpost report mechanisms for some websites.

<http://parentinfo.org/article/the-6-apps-and-services-that-every-parent-should-know-about>

Information from CEOP and Parent Zone about the most popular apps for children and young people

www.kent.gov.uk/esafety – Guidance from Kent County Council

If you are worried that your child is at risk of harm or a criminal offence has been committed then you can report your concerns to the Police or Children’s Social Care. Please do not notify suspicious profiles of your actions, as this could enable them to delete material which might be required for any Police investigations. You can contact Kent Police via 101 or 999 if there is immediate risk or CEOP by visiting www.ceop.police.uk and using the ‘Click CEOP’ reporting button. You can also contact Kent Children’s Social Services on 03000 41 11 11, or email centraldutyteam@kent.gov.uk.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads, Ms Gower, Mrs Ashmore and myself, are available to discuss any help you may need or concerns that you may have.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Garrett

Mrs S Garrett
Headteacher