E safety Update

Blackpool Aspire Academy

October 2016

Weeks into the first term of school, your child may still be settling into back to school mode. Helping them to manage the many firsts they will experience can be challenging, especially with the added digital nature of their lives.

To help you give them the confidence to navigate key online issues they may face we are sharing advice from internetmatters.org's experts

1. Cyberbullying – how to equip your child to deal with it?

The school years have always been a time to grapple with the meaning of friendship and where you fit in. Your child will have the same anxieties – but it's also likely they'll be thinking about their online popularity and how they interact with their peer group online. They may be setting up social network accounts for the first time and will face some tricky issues such as how much to share of themselves and what people might do with that information.

Even if you don't feel that tech savvy, you can help. Talk about what should remain private and precious and what they can comfortably share. Talk about what makes a good friend – whether on or off line, talk about kindness and respect and how they might handle conflict both on and off line. Most importantly let them know that if something goes wrong, and they think they're being bullied – whether on or offline, you are there to help.

Link: https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/expert-opinion/expert-advice-key-e-safety -concerns-kids-head-back-school/?

2. Protecting them online at school

A great many teachers regard mobiles as a curse. They are generally small enough to hide without any difficulty and their multiple ways of communicating, not to mention the high definition cameras that are

now built in, mean it is easy to imagine how they might become a source of great distraction when pupils ought to be paying attention to other matters.

When mobiles first started appearing in schools some Heads tried to ban them altogether. Eventually it became clear this was way too crude. Mobiles have become integral to how modern families operate. A more sophisticated line has emerged: if a phone rings or is seen being used during lessons or Assembly it is likely to be confiscated, at least for the day and sometimes a parent is required to attend to collect the phone. That makes sure they know what their son or daughter has been up to!

And if a teacher has any reason to believe that, for example, a mobile phone might contain pornographic images the teacher can search the child and seize the phone, even if the child

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3. Getting them ready for social media

With children starting secondary school, it's a key time to talk about social media. As new friendship groups are forming in school these relationships are also playing out online. There can be pressure to join social networks, despite the fact that apps like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have a minimum age of 13. Children using those services are likely to be connecting with lots of new friends and they need to ensure they only connect with people they know in person and have activated privacy settings.

Furthermore, with friendships changing, cyberbullying and digital drama could occur. There can be a pressure to exclude or be mean to others, and they may find themselves on the receiving end of such behaviour. It's important that children know to seek help from an adult and report on social networks. If you as a parent need support, then the school can be a real help here.

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4. Sexting - How big is the problem?

According to recent reports more than 2,000 youngsters were reported to the police for sexting. What would you say to parents who may be worried about this as their child heads back to school?

Firstly, this quote is wildly misleading as it's probable that these children did not need to be criminalised. "Show you mine if you show me yours" is a natural & important part of childhood development, only now kids are doing that with their phones rather than behind the bike shed. Parents need to have open & transparent conversations with their children about sex/sexting and not fly off the handle if anything does happen. If your child feels comfortable to tell you, that's the biggest part of your job done!

If images find their way online there is nearly always a way to remove them, especially children under 18 as these are illegal images. The law about indecent images was created in the 70's before mobiles were even thought of, so it can't possibly take into account that children would be rapidly creating "indecent images" of themselves, thankfully the NCA have created a new outcome code that means police can still help, but do not have to criminalise kids. The most important focus in these situations should not be about the images but the emotional support the children involved get. No child wants their parent to see or even think they might take a picture like that, so be kind be understanding and try to put yourself in their position; it's still the same behaviour as years ago, it's just the tech that's changed.

For more information about e safety :

- **go to http://www.blackpoolaspireacademy.co.uk**
- **come into school and talk to a member of Student Services**