Safer Internet Day

Tips for encouraging open discussion about digital life

Make your interest clear

Ask to see your child's favourite games and apps which will help you spot issues

Be open, honest, and appropriate to their age

When answering questions about puberty, relationships, etc.

Remind your child they can always talk to you

Even when they view harmful content, talking about it openly will help

Discuss that not everything we see online is real

Use examples from your own online world, like posts that show perfect houses

Try to remain calm

Your initial reaction could stop a child from speaking openly about what they've seen

Create a family agreement

About device use including when to use devices, parental controls and why it's good to talk

Keep talking

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Loot boxes

With the run up to Christmas, many children will be asking for "in game currency" for their favourite games. Most purchases for these games come in the form of a "loot box".

What are the risks?

Random odds

You cannot simply buy the item that you want, you instead have a random chance of getting the item instead. Rarer items have lower odds. This is essentially a form of gambling.

Cost

Loot boxes can cost anywhere from £1 to £5 each. Players are encouraged to spend more to get a better deal. Players are not buying the item they want; they just have a chance to get the item they want.

Virtual items

Items are normally cosmetic only and do not unlock any new gameplay. Items cannot be transferred to the next game so become worthless when the sequel arrives.

Addictive

Loot boxes are design to be addictive with free loot boxes given to players as a method of encouraging players to buy more. A recent study has shown that 15% of young gamers had taken money from their parents without their permission to purchase loot boxes.

Staying safe online
Advice to share with your child

Tell a trusted adult if something upsets you

Take breaks from being online

Don't chat with strangers

Ask permission before downloading anything

Avoid sharing private photos

Don't give away personal information

Double check your news sources

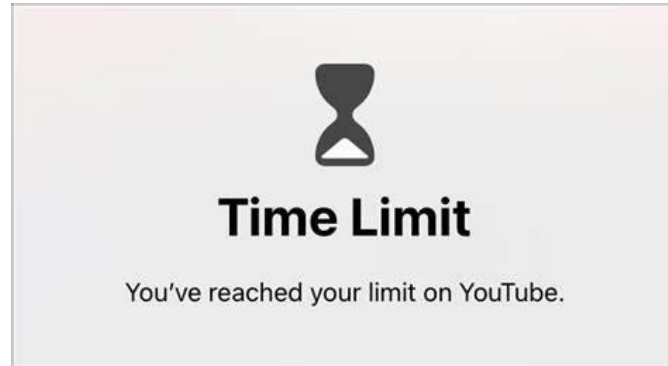**Take notice of age restrictions**

Stick to trusted apps

Be suspicious of new information

Show respect to others

Be honest with parents and carers

Managing screen time

Both apple and android have built in tools to help you monitor and reduce the screen time of your child.

App limits
Set how long your child can use apps each day. Once the timer runs out, they will be locked out the app till the next day. You can use your password to add more time however.

Sleep mode
After a certain time, block notifications from all apps and decide which apps (if any) can be used. Decide at what time sleep mode is disabled, allowing access to the device again.

Track app usage
View how the device is currently being used and how long is being spent on which app.

Routines

Create automated routines, for example every Monday and Wednesday between 3-5pm, allow only educational apps to be used and disable all other apps.

How to get started
All features can be found built into the phone's settings. Either searching for "digital wellbeing" on Android or "Screen time" on iPhone. Guides below:

Apple - Use Screen Time on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch - Apple Support

Android - Manage how you spend time on your Android phone with Digital Wellbeing - Android Help (google.com)

Starting a conversation about life online

Be positive and open-minded about the internet

Talk early and often
Make conversations about the internet part of your daily routine

Create a safe space for conversations
Talking face to face can sometimes be difficult, so talking while walking alongside or while in a car might be easier. Make sure there are no distractions

Keep it relevant
The way your child uses the internet will change as they grow older. So, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have to get a feel of the challenges and experiences they face online

Be proactive
Create an agreement together on how the internet will be used, including time spend online, who your child can communicate with, appropriate apps and games and safety tools to report and block harmful content

Reporting online concerns

What should you do when you see online abuse or inappropriate content?

It may be that you, or your child, come across something upsetting or concerning online. It is important that you feel confident about what to do if you do see something inappropriate online, or if your child tells you they've seen something.

Reporting online – NSPCC has a clear guide of how to report for all different types of incidents - Reporting online safety concerns | NSPCC

Reporting through the school – An email to our online safety coordinator (reillyj@hattonacademy.org.uk) or to any member of staff will allows us to support you are your child. Please note that emails are not always monitored outside of school hours.

WhatsApp changes

WhatsApp is making many changes to their app with a big release set for 2024. Below are some changes to be aware of.

Hidden chats
Chats can be locked or hidden completely. This means even if you do check in with who your child is talking to, not all chats may be visible.

Message editing
Messages can now be edited 15 minutes after being sent. This allow conversation to be manipulated and the original message lost. Edited messages will have "edited" written on them, it is impossible to see the original message. More information below
https://www.childnet.com/blog/find-out-whatsapps-new-features-and-how-it-can-impact-online-safety/

Pass key
WhatsApp can be locked with a code. Making the app impossible to open with a fingerprint or PIN.