St Mary's
Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Using the Internet Safely – Tips for Parents

Social media has many benefits - but it's also very easy to give too much information away. Here are some tips for parents concerned their children are sharing too much online. The instant nature of posting and sharing means it's incredibly easy to give too much information away, be it personal information, opinions or private photographs.

Sharing can have negative consequences, including providing personal details to undesirable people. Please find below 12 tips for parents to help stop children oversharing and use the internet safely.

1. Is your child sharing inappropriate selfies?
Discuss the reasons why they feel the need to share such images and the potential long-term impact this could have on them if the pictures are used without their consent.

Peer pressure and the desire for attention can be reasons why some children feel the need to share inappropriate photos with their online friends.

2. Do you feel your child is spending too much time on social media?
Talk together so they understand your concerns. Agree house rules on when and how long they can go online and which sites they should visit.

3. Is your child putting themselves at risk by sharing their location through apps?
Make sure geolocation is disabled to keep their whereabouts private. Explain why it's important that they never share personal information with people they don't know online.

4. Has your child posted too much personal information?
Talk to them about who they've shared the information with and assess the risk it poses to your child. You can also ask your child to remove the information from their account and help them understand how to share safely.

5. Is your child chatting to strangers online?
Make sure your child understands that people may hide behind fake profiles for dishonest reasons and the person they've been chatting to could easily be someone with bad intentions.

6. Is your child gaming with strangers online?
Playing games online can be fun and positive but make sure your child understands people may hide behind fake profiles for dishonest reasons and learn how to block and report anything offensive.

7. Does your child have hundreds of followers?

Explain that some people may not be who they say they are and tell your child how privacy settings can put them in control of who they talk to.

8. Has your child shared embarrassing images?

Remind your child that these images are their personal digital footprint for years to come and advise them to use settings that only let them share with friends they know. If they're not comfortable wearing it on their T-shirt, they shouldn't put it online.

9. Is your child at risk of being cyberbullied?

Stay calm, listen without judging and reassure your child that you can help. Discuss any action you may take together. Encourage them not to retaliate and to save any evidence.

10. Does your child understand that what they share online can hurt others?

Talk together about peer pressure and how screens and anonymity can lead to behaviour that is hurtful. Remind them there's a fine line between sharing content because it's funny or might get lots of 'likes' versus the potential to cause offence or hurt.

11. Has your child been affected by content shared online?

Encourage them to think about why friends may share certain posts. Show them how to gently challenge their friends if they find their content offensive. Remind them they can always talk to you about things happening online.

12. Is your child old enough to share on social?

Most social media apps and websites have a minimum age rating of 13. If a social network has set an age limit it means that some of the content may not be suitable for a younger child.

Further comprehensive and easy-to-use resources including the most up-to-date information for keeping your child safe online, can be found on Internet Matters.

You may want to also explore **What is livestreaming and what are the dangers?**

Internet Matters.org was founded by BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media and helps parents to ensure their children learn, create, share and have fun online whilst staying safe.

Research conducted by Internet Matters revealed that 74% of parents want more information and advice about online safety. To meet this demand, Internetmatters.org has been created as a one-stop hub, directing parents to valuable help and advice from the leading experts at organisations and charities in the child internet safety field.