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Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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Dear Parents/ Carers,

Online safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Clutton Primary School. All of our pupils are taught how to stay safe and behave appropriately online, but this approach is only successful if we work together and reinforce safe behaviour at home too.

As we embark on a new year, we feel that this is an appropriate time to highlight some simple online safety tips to help parents/ carers engage with and support their children online.

Talk to your children:

In order to protect children online, it is vital that we take an active interest in their online lives and engage in the digital world with them.

•   Let your children teach you about their online world and how they use technology; playing new games and exploring websites together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.

•   Make sure your children know that you are safe and approachable; remind them that they can tell you if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable, without being told off or punished.

Take a look at the conversation starter ideas and family agreement template available from Childnet International: *www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/have-a-conversation*

Be 'Share Aware':

If your children love to socialise online, it can be difficult to monitor who they are talking to and what they post all of the time. However there are some simple steps you can take to help minimise the risks.

•   Talk to your child about what is and isn't appropriate to share online; whether it is their date of birth, location or photographs, they should be really careful about posting their personal information.

•   Make sure your child understands how their privacy settings work; show your child how to make their online accounts private and discuss how to block and report other people online. Think U Know and the UK Safer Internet Centre have helpful guides:

o   www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

o   www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers

•   Ensure that you role-model positive behaviour online; consider asking your child's permission before posting photos of them online and empower them to have control over their 'digital reputation'.

Have a look at the advice produced by the NSPCC and watch the 'Share Aware' videos with your children: www.nspcc.org.uk/ShareAware

Managing screen-time:

Some parents feel guilty about the amount of time their children spend looking at a screen, but you can help your child maintain a healthy balance between online and offline activities.

•   Set boundaries for children online the same way you do in the 'real world'. Don't try to ban the internet; instead agree as a family how long tech should be used for and what the limits, expectations and consequences are.

•   Share quality time together. Consider nominating 'tech-free' areas or times, such as your child's bedroom or dinner time, where you can give each other undivided attention and share offline experiences, like reading a book together.

•   Familiarise yourself with the parental controls on your home devices or from your broadband provider; if 'rules' aren't enough for your children, you may find switching the 'Wi-Fi' off in the evenings or keeping charges downstairs may help ensure that they get a good night's rest.

•   Be a good role-model; remember that your children will follow your example, so think about your own use of technology and how often you pick up your devices.

Internet Matters has a helpful interactive guide to parental controls: www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide

Make it enriching:

As adults, it is important that we acknowledge the many wonderful and positive opportunities the internet provides for our children; we just need to steer them in the right direction.

•   Encourage your child's creativity by teaching them how to take photos or make videos safely; these can be used to make a collage or be shared with family and friends.

•   Take the screens outside and utilise mobile devices to go on a real-life treasure hunt; when used safely 'Geocaching' and augmented reality games such as 'Pokémon Go' can enable parents to play with their children online, as well as enjoying fresh air and exercise.

•   Being online should be a sociable activity; keep your devices in a communal area and take it in turns to choose a game or video that the whole family can enjoy together. Why not take it in turns the good old fashioned way to beat the highest scorer?

•   Create learning opportunities. There are a number of educational apps and resources available online or simply encourage your children to safely research different things online.

Have a look at this article from Digital Parenting Magazine, which recommends educational apps to help you and your family enjoy the outdoors:
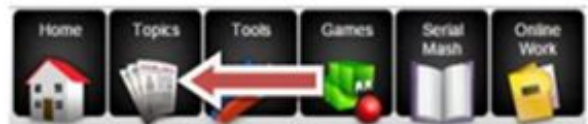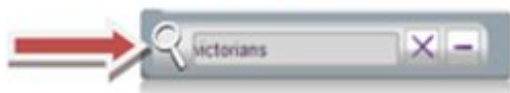*www.vodafonedigitalparenting.co.uk/useful-tools/outdoor-apps*

PurpleMash

We have recently subscribed to Purple Mash, which is a creative educational website for children. Purple Mash is a cross-curricular resource covering Art to Science and all subjects in between. Your child can access Purple Mash from home on a laptop, desktop or a tablet.

Purple Mash is a safe environment that does not require any downloading or allow interaction with people online and children cannot make any financial transactions.

We will be encouraging the children to continue their learning at home and Purple Mash is a great resource for this. Your child will be taught how to use Purple Mash in school and will be able to use it without supervision, but you may want to take a few minutes to explore it yourself so that you can help them with their work.

Topics

Purple Mash has over 1,500 ready-to-use writing and painting projects. They cover everything from aliens to the Victorians. You can use the 'Topics' tab to browse by subject or, alternatively, use the search bar at the bottom right of the screen to look for something specific.

Tools and Games

There are 20+ open-ended tools and games inside Purple Mash. They range in complexity from simple painting programs to sophisticated coding tools. If you're using something for the first time it is a good idea to watch the help vidoes which can be found by clicking the monitor icon at the top right of the screen or the help documents.

Saving and Sharing Work

Purple Mash lets your child save their work online. It's very easy just look out for the floppy disk icon on the toolbar and follow the simple instructions. To access saved files go to the 'Online Work' tab. Once saved you can also 'share' work. Just look out for the globe icon on the toolbar. This will share work to one of our school's "display boards" or create a link so your work can be viewed online by people that don't have Purple Mash.

Want to know more? If you're keen to get to know Purple Mash inside and out, there is a video trainer that will lead you through the whole of Purple Mash and explain exactly what it can do. You can view the video trainer using the link below. *http://www.purplemash.com/app/videos/videotrainer*

Class teachers will be sending your child's username and password home.

Please keep this information safe and secure. Do not share your login details. If you cannot login please contact the school directly. For security reasons 2Simple Software cannot give out login details to anyone other than the school administrator – this is for your child's protection.

It is early days with this program, there is lots to explore and the children are very keen to be able to use this at home.

Any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to see me,

Kind regards,

Mrs Muckley
ICT Subject Leader