e-safety adviser

EDITION 3 - JULY 2013

FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

WELCOME to Edition 3 of the newsletter. Firstly I must offer an apology – this newsletter is supposed to be monthly and I haven't achieved that. Very busy work commitments and a serious illness in the family has meant that I haven't been able to do what I wanted. With that said, things are now looking much better and I am able to keep to schedules far better than before.

As the school holidays fast approach I thought it would be a good idea to reflect on the last few months. I visit many schools as part of my consultancy in order to deliver training and awareness about online safety issues, and this includes training/awareness for parents too.

A lot of the questions I get asked are the same regardless of where I am in the country, so I thought it would be good to concentrate on a couple of these questions and give appropriate guidance. After the school summer holidays I will then continue the series of questions and appropriate advice.

Once we move into the holidays my work at schools reduces significantly. That is good as it gives me the opportunity to start preparing for the forthcoming year. This includes putting new courses together for schools and parents, updating or re-designing websites and much more. I will also be re-designing this newsletter, I am even thinking of putting it onto iTunes and Amazon so that new editions can simply be downloaded (don't worry, it will still be free).

I have started to completely overhaul the parents website which will have lots of free resources, advice, videos etc. so that there is lots more information for you.

As ever, enjoy this newsletter, have a great summer.

Alan

WEBSITE FOR SCHOOLS

WWW.ESAFETY-ADVISER.COM

WEBSITE FOR PARENTS

WWW.PARENTSONLINESAFETY.COM

CONTACT ME - SUPPORT@ESAFETY-ADVISER.COM

It is often easy (and understandable) to blame technology for some of the risks that are inherent on the Internet, but the technology is not the issue – risk is caused by behaviour, not technology. That behaviour is sometimes a consequence of not knowing, and sometimes it is deliberate.

Let's be honest with ourselves, did you take risks when you were a child? Did you push the boundaries sometimes? Did you always do what your Mum or Dad told you to do? If you were like me, taking the odd risk here and there was a part of growing up. Whilst our parents would have liked to shroud us in cotton wool to protect us it would have had little benefit. In fact it would potentially put us at more risk, as we wouldn't know how to respond if we did get into an uncomfortable situation. In the "real world" we call this streetwise.

Discussing safe use of the Internet with our children is absolutely vital. The often-used excuse "my son/daughter knows more about computers than I do" is misleading – you don't need to know about computers, or have an in-depth knowledge of technology to understand risk and behaviour.

Professor Tanya Byron used a very appropriate analogy in her report to the Labour government a few years ago; this was the swimming pool analogy. At an early age we will sit with our children in the toddler pool, armbands on and lifeguards surrounding us. Your child will slowly become more confident in the water, they will understand what they can/can't do. They will become more confident, the armbands will come off and eventually they will be in the big pool at the deep end. After time they will become confident to swim in the sea where there are no lifeguards or safeguards. That doesn't mean to say we won't stop worrying, of course we will, that's what parents do. But at least we know we have done as much as possible to prevent something bad from happening.

This is no different to technology. At an early age we will sit with our children on a laptop, an iPad, their Playstation, or whatever else they are using. Along the way they will naturally be exposed to risk, this could be an inappropriate image as a result of a Google search, or it could be somebody swearing during an online game. It could be somebody making inappropriate comments that leads to bullying.

When this happens, think about what you would do in the real world, how would you tackle this issue?

If your child comes across an inappropriate image on the TV or in a magazine, how do you respond to that?

DISCUSSING SAFE USE WITH YOUR CHILD

Different parents will explain in different ways, and of course it is dependent on the age of the child.

What if somebody swears or starts saying inappropriate things when playing online? If somebody was doing that to me I would report the person (in real life I would tell the parents) and block them (in real life I wouldn't talk to them).

In the example of people saying things that could lead to bullying the advice is the same, I would talk to the parents in the real world (or report them online), but I would also be explaining to my children that sometimes people say things on the Internet just because they can, and those people should be ignored (blocked).

I will continue with this type of advice in future newsletters, but the best piece of advice I can give you is this – forget the technology, consider what you would do in real life and the advice you would give to your children. The advice and discussion you have with your children is no different.

Alan

HOW AND WHERE TO REPORT

Reporting is a much more difficult area, simply because there isn't one single area to make reports about specific issues.

With that said, there are two reporting mechanisms that everybody should be aware of, namely CEOP and IWF (in the U.K.)

CEOP is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (see link on

the last page). They are an arm of the U.K. police whose remit is to protect children online from child abuse by

investigating, tracking and bringing offenders to justice. They do incredible work in an area that most of us would find sickening.

The graphic you see above is called the CEOP Report button. This can be found on the CEOP website, and increasingly on many other sites and services on the Internet. If you or your child thinks they may be at risk or is in any way concerned, by clicking this button a report can be made to a human being.

Secondly, we have the IWF, the Internet Watch Foundation.

The IWF is a U.K. charity whose remit is to reduce potentially criminal content on the Internet, specifically:

- Child sexual abuse content anywhere in the world.
- Criminally obscene adult content hosted in the U.K.
- Non-photographic child sexual abuse images hosted in the U.K.

Similar to CEOP, the IWF also has a "Report" button on their website where you can make a report.

But what about everything else? This is where things get a little more complicated because it entirely depends on what you or your children are using.

Adults, children and young people use hundreds of different types of Internet services, software and apps. A few examples would be:

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Snapchat

Kik

Moshi Monsters

Club Penguin

Online games via Playstation or Xbox

Apps on the mobile phone

The large majority of these have their own online reporting systems, some are manned by a human (moderated) and some are not. For example, on Club Penguin (for the younger children) users are able to press a Report button whilst they are in the game. This will be seen by a human moderator who will have a look to see if there is a concern and if so will take necessary action. This could be sanctions against a person (for example using bad language or bullying) such as preventing access for a certain amount of time, or banning the user entirely for repeat offending.

Furthermore, many sites such as this have a facility where an abusive person can be "blocked".

This is where discussing your child's internet activity becomes so important because it would be impossible for me to advise you on every single site or service that children use. But, by discussing what your child does on the Internet, and where he or she goes,

you can then sit down with them and assure yourself that there are appropriate safeguarding facilities on that particular site. You can show them how to block and report people, and importantly let them know to tell you if somebody is upsetting them.

With that said, there is a very good chance that your child already knows, so why not get them to tell you about the safeguarding features?

Making a report to the big social networks such as Facebook and Twitter is, in my experience, very hit and miss. These types of services are very "free speech" orientated, and quite often the burden of proof is upon you. For example, if somebody has created a false profile in your child's name you have to prove it. If somebody has shared a photograph of you or your child without permission, good luck getting it deleted. The advice here is to ask the person who posted the photograph to delete it.

Furthermore Facebook (and others) have been widely reported in the media for their inconsistent policy for highly

questionable (and sometimes illegal) material, and have only taken action due to high publicity or significant complaints.

I'm not picking on Facebook here, I'm simply using them as an example as they get reported in the media more than any other service due to their sheer amount of users (over a billion), and whilst I don't agree that they should have so many problems, I can understand it.

As I previously mentioned, this is a very big area and I will continue to give advice to concerns such as this.

I hope you enjoyed this issue, and as usual if there is anything specific you would like to see in the newsletter then do get in touch and let me know.

Alan

USEFUL WEBSITES:

Lots of information for parents (currently being updated) – http://www.parentsonlinesafety.com

Lots of information for parents at CEOP - http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Making a report to CEOP - https://www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/

Making a report to IWF - http://www.iwf.org.uk/

Making a report to Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/help/?page=204546626249212

Making a report to Twitter - https://support.twitter.com/groups/56-policies-violations#topic_236