Welcome to this week's SMRT Safeguarding Update…

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

Online Safety

We hope that your child or children have had a positive week in school and are enjoying re-connecting with many of their friends. We know that new Year 7 students have started to make friends and are enjoying their new subjects.

However, if there are any worries or a student feels they haven't settled, please contact the school and let us know. Our pastoral teams will be able to help introduce them to other people and alert their tutors that they may need to support them in addressing any of their concerns.

As students connect with each other, there are often new online friendships, chat groups and social media sites that they start to explore. This can be daunting for children (and adults!) and have some additional risks attached. We recommend the website www.internetmatters.org as a good source of information and advice.

While we will be sharing further online safety information over the course of the year, the ABC online safety checklist has proved invaluable for many parents and carers. Please use this direct link: https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/abc-online-safety-checklist or the content below for more information and advice.

All ages

Activate
- Turn on broadband filters for basic protection on devices in the home.
- Manage SafeSearch.
- Password-protect app stores to limit downloads.
- Update parental controls as their online activies change.

Balance
- Set a good example with your own screen use.
- Create screen-free zones at home.
- Switch off devices an hour before bedtime.
- Encourage children to take breaks (for example every 20 mins).
- Charge devices outside bedrooms.
- Use screen time tools to help manage how much time they spend online, e.g. Google Family link for Android or Screen Time for Apple.
- Set digital boundaries and routines together (Family Agreement).

Check

Review the minimum age requirements for the apps, games and platforms for your child wants to use.

Discuss online risks and strategies to tackle them.

Ask children what they like to do online and why.

Show them how to report or block inappropriate content on platforms they use.

Share your concerns about their online safety.

Talk regularly with your child about their online life in casual settings (like over dinner or during a walk).

Ages 11 – 13

Activate

Create child profiles on platforms they use.

Limit chat and data sharing on online games like Roblox and Minecraft.

Limit smartphone features to essential apps only.

Review privacy settings on social media together.

Use family or parent modes on platforms with social features to supervise use, like TikTok Family Pairing (13+ only) and Roblox Allowed Experiences.

Balance

Encourage children to explore a range of different types of media.

Help them balance active (creating) and passive (watching) screen time.

Help them review how much time they spend on devices (based on the tools you use) to help them learn balance.

Encourage them to be selective about what they do online.

Check 👁

Check if apps are right for their age and maturity level.	☐
Talk about ways to deal with online reputation, screen time use and cyberbullying.	☐
Ask them to show you how they use their apps and discuss safety measures.	☐
Ask them what they share online and how it makes them feel.	☐
Discuss ways to protect their privacy on different platforms.	☐

Ages 14+

Activate

Review privacy settings on social media together.	☐
Use family or parent modes on platforms with social features to supervise use, like TikTok Family Pairing and Snapchat Family Centre.	☐

Balance

Show them how to use screen time tools to check their device and app usage.	☐
Encourage them to be selective about what they do online.	☐
Empower teens to watch and follow a range of content types to avoid falling into echo chambers.	☐

Check

Ask them to show you how they use their apps and discuss safety measures.	☐
Ask them what they share online and how it makes them feel.	☐
Discuss ways to protect their privacy on different platforms.	☐
Together, review how to report users and content on the platforms they use.	☐

Instagram

Wake up Wednesday continues our theme of supporting students with online safety, in particular *Instagram.*

As of 2024, social media giant *Instagram* has over two billion active users, with 8% of those (approximately 1.6 million) being under-18. That's a lot of children and young people making use of this platform and exploring its features, but also being exposed to its risks. Risks are varied, ranging from influencer marketing / culture and unrealistic ideals, to contact with strangers and those looking to exploit young people.

As parents, carers and educators together, it's important we understand and share information on how to keep children protected as they discover new ways to socialise and interact online.

We recommend you read the information and consider implementing the advice on ***What Parents and Educators Need to Know About INSTAGRAM (13+),*** which is included as a separate attachment.

As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk