

WINCHESTER COLLEGE

E-SAFETY GUIDE FOR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

This guide offers advice on how you and your family can safely get the best out of mobile phones and the Internet. Technology continues to develop rapidly and all of our young people are now growing up with all sorts of electronic media which are considered the norm. Although it does not seem complicated to them, it can often leave parents feeling behind and out of touch.

At Winchester, we believe that the challenge for everyone, particularly parents, is to make sure that young people today fully understand and are prepared for the possibilities – both good and bad – presented by new technology.

The School addresses the issues of cyber bullying in its Child Protection policy, which can be found at <http://www.winchestercollege.org/child-protection>.

As well as the information provided in this booklet, there are also some very useful resources available to parents which can be found as detailed below.

Other useful sources of information:

www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents/
www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/At-Home/
<http://parents.vodafone.com/>
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
<http://stopcyberbullying.org>

MOBILE PHONES

Mobiles have evolved from a mobile version of the traditional phone into a handheld personal computer, TV, video camera and music system.

Access to the Internet on mobiles has also made available types of material that are unsuitable for young adults.

Talking points for parents and advice to give to your children:

- never give out any information about yourself unless you know the caller;
- let the caller identify themselves – particularly if no number is displayed;
- if you receive a call from a problem number, don't respond: divert such calls to your mailbox without answering;
- do not leave alternative contact details on your mailbox greeting;

- be very careful who you give your number to and ask those you have given it to not to pass it on.

If a young person does receive a nuisance text or BBM message, they should:

- never respond to the message;
- show it to a trusted family member, teacher or parent;
- keep the message as evidence;
- make a note of the sender's number of the originating details found at the end of the message.

MOBILE PHONES & THE INTERNET

Mobile phones that offer access to the Internet afford young people the possibility to access a range of information and services intended for adults only – from pornography and violence to on-line gaming.

Some mobile phone providers offer a safeguarding filtering service which allows the young person to surf the rest of the Internet whilst being prevented from reaching adult content. It is worth exploring these options with your service provider.

PICTURE & VIDEO MESSAGING

Young people often take photographs and videos of themselves and each other on their mobile phones but they should be careful how they then share these images. Inappropriate images could easily be passed between phones and put online. Control over the images may be lost and they could end up in the hands of strangers. Images may also be used to fuel bullying or harassment.

Talking points for parents and advice to give to your children:

- never send pictures that embarrass other people or show them partially clothed: this is especially true of images taken of other children;
- posting photos of yourself online in public areas could help you be identified by strangers;
- sending unpleasant or indecent images to others may be an offence in certain situations;
- watch out for people – particularly unknown adults – taking pictures of you or your friends;
- hitting other people for the purposes of recording the image on a camera phone ('happy slapping') is an assault – and a criminal offence. If you are sent an image of an assault on another individual, keep the image and show it straightaway to a parent, teacher or trusted adult.

THE INTERNET

The Internet has become part of the fabric of our life and a resource that we wonder how we ever lived without. The opportunities for communication, exploration, teaching and learning provide exciting opportunities for our young people but it also creates a need for them to safeguard themselves and understand the need for care, restraint and responsibility.

Consider having content filters or parental controls in place at home. This will block access to over 18 websites or social networking sites for example. It is also worth considering the benefits of having the home computer in a family area rather than your child's bedroom, or not enabling Internet access on a portable lap top.

ONLINE CHATROOMS

Chatrooms are websites where people exchange messages with individuals from all over the world – it is an open forum.

Talking points for parents and advice to give to your children:

- be careful who you trust – people are not always who they say they are;
- don't give out personal information about where you live/go to school/socialise etc.;
- use a nickname that doesn't give away your identity;
- stay in charge – if the chat gets out of hand you have the control to stop it;
- think before answering – especially if you are in a private chat room rather than a public one;
- never meet up with anyone met through a chatroom unless accompanied by an adult;
- don't open website links that are posted in chatrooms as these can contain viruses.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The last couple of years have seen a rapid expansion in a number of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr or Twitter. Social networking sites are typically used as a place to post on-line diaries in the form of 'blogs' and will also contain pictures, lists of likes and dislikes, contact details as well as the ability to post messages. Familiarise yourself with how these sites operate and consider reaching an understanding with your child that you will periodically review their profile. Use any obvious mistakes as an opportunity for both you and your child to learn; these sites will not go away and it is crucial for them to have been educated in the complexities of such issues.

Talking points for parents and advice to give to your children:

- remember that anyone, anywhere, can see what you have posted. Some universities and potential employers have taken to checking applicants' postings on such sites;
- be careful posting pictures of yourself if they could identify where you live, go to school or otherwise spend time;

- never post pictures that embarrass other people or show them partially clothed; this is especially true of images taken of other children;
- be careful who you share information with and remember that a 'friend of a friend' may be no friend to you;
- do not reply to message from people you don't know and it's always best to keep your friends list to people you actually know as opposed to strangers;
- report anything odd or disturbing – or instances of bullying – to an adult and the website itself.

Also be aware of the risks associated with collaborative on-line gaming; some users may use the social interaction in an attempt to exploit the young.