STAY SAFE ON LINE!

Welcome back to our termly e-safety bulletin.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology.

Whether on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter, through a mobile phone or on gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen. Parents need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator or innocent bystander. By it's very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Possible signs of cyberbullying

It is not always easy to spot the signs of cyberbullying as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different from other forms of bullying. Be alert to a change in your child's behaviour, for example:

- Being upset after using the internet or mobile phone
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about use of phone or online activities
- After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or cross
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting school friends
- Suddenly spending much more or much less time texting or using social media
- Many new numbers, texts or email addresses showing up on their phone/tablet

Hints and tips for Parents:

- Technology is constantly changing and children are continually learning – keep up to date on latest developments so you know about the risks
- Online safety applies to all types of devices – PCs, laptops, tablets, phones, e readers and online gaming
- As technology becomes more mobile, set guidelines for where your child could/should use their device
- Treat online safety in the same way as you would offline safety such as stranger danger and crossing the road
- Set up internet security so that children can't access websites with adult and inappropriate content
- Don't write anything online that you wouldn't say in person. Comments made on social media could reflect badly on your child
- Check out the school e safety policy
- Cyberbullying should be treated in the same way as other forms of bullying; contact the school for help
- Be aware that 'sexting' increasingly involves younger children, some as young as 10
- Try to establish a system which allows your child to talk to you about anything they feel uncomfortable about

Things to discuss with children:

- Where is it acceptable to use your portable device? Bedroom? School?
- Who should you talk to if you feel uncomfortable about something you have seen online? eg parent, teacher or other responsible adult
- Don't spend too long online; make sure you get some physical exercise every day
- Keep passwords safe – don't write them down and change them regularly
- What personal information is appropriate to post online?
- How do you report cyberbullying? Take a screen shot of any posts so these can be seen at a later date if needed
- How do you know the people you are talking to online, are who you think they are?
- When is it sensible to meet up with an online friend?

If you suspect a child is being harassed or bullied either over the internet or via mobile phone, ask them to give you details. If your child tells you that someone is bothering them online, take it seriously. Offer practical help as well as emotional support. Print out the evidence for future reference. Talk to someone at school if other pupils at the school are involved. There is a wealth of information and guidance on cyberbullying – please ask if you need support.