



## Foxton Primary School

### E-Safety

Last October the School ran an information evening for parents to discuss Cyberbullying.

I have been reviewing the information available to parents and children about Cyberbullying and also more widely about e-Safety and now share what I have learned via this annual report.

Before I get into the detail, I recommend everyone who can access the internet visits [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) and has a go at the quiz in the Parent/Carer section. It is an eye-opener! Did you know for example that POS means "parent over shoulder"....

### Cyberbullying

22% of children and young people in the UK claim to have been the target of cyberbullying. Cyber bullying is:

*"when a child or young person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child or young person using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones."*

Because it is a relatively new thing, children, parents and schools are still learning about it and about how to deal with it. It is already apparent, however that it is a different form of bullying, because:

- It can be invasive of personal space and the home environment,
- It can persist throughout the day, every day
- A very large audience can be reached very quickly
- Cyberbullies will try to remain anonymous

Schools can help to teach our children appropriate behaviour in using new technologies, but often are prevented from intervening in cyberbullying situations because by their nature they are all pervasive and often fall outside the school's remit e.g. malicious texting to a mobile; nasty messages in chat rooms on the home PC. Parents need to be alive to the possibility that their child may be prey to a cyberbully or to be a perpetrator of cyberbullying, (or both) as it can be very upsetting for the child involved and quickly escalate. The most common advice I have read is to keep lines of communication open between you and your child – the experts stress the need for parents neither to over nor under react. Any cyberbullying must be treated seriously and acted upon – it won't just go away.

Fortunately there is lots of help and information available – the two most helpful internet sites I found were: [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org) and [www.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying).

## Internet safety

The *Byron Review: Children and New Technology 2008* says that our younger children use the internet mostly for games; then aged between 12 and 15 young people access it for school work, downloading music and films and watching video clips and our older teens communicate with friends, use social networking sites, read and write and blogs and upload information about themselves.

There are, however, risks associated with its use which we all need to be alive to and to manage as best we can.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre says that, the 5 main risks to children and young people connected with internet use are, putting the most commonly encountered risk first:

- Being a victim of computer spyware and viruses
- Seeing inappropriate and pornographic images
- Bullying or harassment by friends or acquaintances (cyber-bullying)
- Contact from strangers
- Identify theft

There are things we can do to help our children manage these risks, but, the Byron Review found that many parents and carers feel that they don't understand the technology as well as their kids. Because of this they feel that they can't help their children to manage the risks involved.

99% of children aged 8-17 access the internet (according to Ofcom) and 90% of children aged 5-16 have a PC at home (according to Childwise) so it is important that we get to grips with the technology. There are also more ways of accessing the internet than we might realize – games consoles, mobile phones, MP3 players and cable and satellite TV can all have internet links.

The good news is that there is lots of help available (see the links below) and the main advice is quite simple: that we talk regularly to our children about what they are doing on the net.

Just as schools like Foxton have written policies – *Rules for Responsible Internet Use aimed at Key Stages 1 and 2*, which the children are all aware of and which are published throughout the School, it is suggested that parents should consider having policies for their own and visiting kids.

You and your child can work together on this – because our children are used to the Schools Rules, they should readily agree to simple rules such as not giving out any personal details in emails or on the internet, telling an adult if you receive an email or message which contains something rude or unpleasant and so on.

If you need some prompts then going through the age-appropriate sections of [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) with your child, discussing the risks and agreeing how best to deal

with them would help. If you don't understand the technology and jargon (what is an IM/ MMS/ Bebo etc) then you may find that a session in front of the screen with your child is the key to your enlightenment!!

In addition we can consider using available software to block viruses and software such as NetNanny or Brightfilter ensures children don't accidentally see inappropriate material. These programmes can be purchased online. It takes about 5 minutes to set up and costs about £25 per year. I recently installed Brightfilter after Stan came across some unsavoury sites – he was quite upset about it and it only takes once for that to happen – we are both now very glad that he has a safety net and can surf the web with confidence knowing that anything inappropriate will simply be blocked.

The links below are useful further reading on this topic and if you do not have internet access but would like to know more, Mrs Jones has lots of printed information on these subjects.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

[www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

[www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)

[www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org)

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