Online Safety Update

As with all social skills, communicating online is an area that children sometimes need guidance with; we've certainly found this in school recently. We can't always know what our children are doing online at all times, but we can help to make their devices safer and help equip them with the skills to manage them well.

With Christmas approaching, perhaps there will be some new devices in your home? With that in mind, we felt it was a good time to share some new resources and remind you of some that we've mentioned before.

WhatsApp requires a minimum age of 16 for an account, due to issues of safeguarding for children. Some further information is attached here from Key Safeguarding, including advice to help make your account safer if you choose to allow your child to access it.

National Online Safety have produced a wide range of **'What Parents Need to Know About …'** resources. These cover lots of popular apps such as TikTok, specific games for popular consoles and reasons for their 15 or 18 certifications as well as more general advice about mental health and wellbeing when using devices. https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides There's a new one each week so why not subscribe to their updates?

Cullompton Community College are no longer posting regular monthly updates, but their guides from last year still remain relevant. They cover topics such as online bullying, games console safety, privacy and good online habits. https://sites.google.com/cullomptoncollege.org/online-safety-hub/home?pli=1

Internet matters have a searchable database of instructions for setting up **parental controls** on a wide range of devices. https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/ Why not set up any new devices before your child receives them for Christmas, then they can start playing safely straight away!

Conversations with your children are always the best starting point; the UK Safer Internet Centre have some great ideas for conversation starters with even the youngest children https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/have-a-conversation as well as a range of further resources to support parents.

Finally, **if you or your children are experiencing any difficulties online**, we at school are always here to listen and lend support. The NSPCC also have a helpline for adults 0808 800 5000 as well as Childline for children 0800 1111. Both these services are also available via their website chat.

Pauline Maynard
(Online Safety Co-ordinator)