



Finchampstead C of E (Aided) Primary School

The Village, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 4JR

An enriching education in a welcoming Christian environment

Dear Parents,

During the week of 8th February we held a Safer Internet Assembly which was attended by many families. Much of the focus this year was on consent, especially focusing on the consent for use of photographs. Following the assembly I met with a group of parents to share concerns, experiences and advice regarding internet use and safety. I have summed up the key points made and discussed during the session. If you feel that you would like to discuss anything further please come and see your child's class teacher or myself.

Most children want to spend a large amount of time on a device, whilst parents do not want them to.

- Parents wish for their children to be playing outside or creatively.
- There are concerns for their physical wellbeing if they are spending too much time on a device.
- Communication is minimal whilst children are on devices and some can go into 'zombie like mode'.

Children's view point

All my friends are talking about it and I can't join in if I don't.
 What do I do, I'm bored?
 I am the only who hasn't got... or isn't allowed...

Parent view point

I don't want to be a parent saying no all the time.
 With a house full of toys, how can you be bored when you are not allowed on technology?
 I want them playing with friends.
 What is the right amount of time?
 Is every other child on that ... has every other child got that...?
 When is the right time to provide a phone?

Discussion led to these points being agreed on by parents present:

- Your child is not the only one who hasn't or isn't the only one not allowed..., they all seem to say that!!
- Setting 1 hour a day or a limited time each day for using technology is important.
- Parents need to be tough and stand by decisions, knowing that you are making them for the right reasons.
- Some children started secondary school with a phone, some without to ensure they can still manage if they haven't got their phone on a given day.
- Boredom doesn't last long, if left without technology devices they will eventually begin to play and have fun.
- Reiterate with your child that nothing is private and not to write or say anything they shouldn't or that they wouldn't say face to face.
- Not to allow phones or devices in bedrooms. It is important that you are able to monitor what your child is playing, watching or doing on a device. Equally not allowing your child any access to technology/social networking can lead to isolation.
- It is difficult to role model a lesser use of technology but it is important to try your best in front of your children. Try to show in your own behaviour how you wish your children to behave in regards to device use.

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The benefits of technology are enormous and exciting and will continually evolve; we need to do everything we can to ensure our children develop a balance to their use of technology and a safe manner in which to engage in it.

Sadly children can be exposed to inappropriate material, messages and communication so being very aware of your child's emotional wellbeing is important. I am sure many of you are aware of a concerning internet trend called the Momo challenge; this follows a similar trend in 2017 called the Blue Whale Challenge; both equally upsetting and concerning. I have spoken with the children today to both reassure them and to reinforce our rules regarding internet safety. Here is some key points I have put together to support you in keeping everyone safe and with any questions your child may have.

What is the Momo Challenge?

- Throughout the challenge, children are sent violent and graphic images and texts. If children want to stop the challenge 'Momo' threatens to leak their personal information.
- Then, the stranger asks children to share photos and videos of themselves completing certain tasks. The scale of these tasks escalates to stealing and then physical harm.
- WhatsApp, YouTube (including kids) and Facebook are the primary networks for the challenge.

What can parents do to keep their children safe from it?

- Ensure children understand the importance of not giving personal information to anyone they do not know.
- Tell their children no-one has the right to make them do anything they do not want to do.
- Use parental controls to keep children safe.
- If your child receives a Momo message, remind them that Momo, although persuasive, is not a real person, Momo doesn't exist. The message is computer generated. Tell them not to respond, at all.

You may wish to refer to the NSPCC website as they publish advice and guidance for parents on discussing online safety with their children. Also <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> provides a parental guide to social media and gaming apps.

Staff work very hard to ensure that our children are secure in their understanding of internet safety and I hope this information supports you in reiterating our messages.

With kind regards

Jacque Vanstone

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