Tips for safe use of the internet and mobile phones

A guide for beginners, parents and carers

Mobile phones, computers, email and social networking sites are great ways of staying in touch with friends and family all over the world.

They are now an essential part of the way young people work, socialise and learn in the modern world.

Parents and carers can do a lot to make sure that it's always a positive, fun and safe experience for their children by agreeing some basic rules with them. Make the time to sit down with your child and talk about the tips in this leaflet.

THE BASICS

- Agree with your child how much time is reasonable to spend online especially when the next day is a school day.
- Children are entitled to privacy. Parents and carers have a responsibility to keep them safe. Discuss with your child which sites they are using and who their online friends are.
- Many internet providers offer free downloads of family protection software. It allows you to filter out websites which are not suitable for

children and restrict the times of day they can access the internet.

- Your child should only share phone numbers, email addresses and online contact details with people she or he knows and trusts.
- Your child should make friends promise not to share phone numbers, email addresses and online contact details without her or his permission.
- Explain to your child why you don't want her or him to use computers and mobile phones to bully anyone else.

SOCIALISING ONLINE
What to tell your child

- Don't use your real name.
  Use a screen name.
- Have a password and secret question
  that nobody else knows or can guess.
- Your password is like your toothbrush.
  Never share it. Change it if someone
  else discovers it.
- If you use the computer in a public
  place, always sign off after finishing
  chatting.

- Learn how to set up a 'safe list' of contacts and filter out people you don't want.
- Many popular websites have a 'report abuse' button. Use this if there is a problem.
- Only accept as friends people you know in real life.
- Even if you have been chatting to someone online for weeks or months, they could be lying about who they are.

PRIVACY IN CYBERSPACE
Tips for your child

- Do not post or email photos that can be used to embarrass her or him.

- Make friends promise not to share her or his photos without permission.
- Ask your child to show you that they know how to use the privacy settings on websites to restrict the information that people can find out about them.

NEVER GIVE

- Your real name or friends' or family. members' names.
- Your home, school or email address.
- Your phone number.
- Credit card details.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

- Ask your child to show you that she or he knows how to record her or his Messenger or chat history. This may be used as evidence.
- Keep nasty messages or texts as evidence. Don't delete them.
- Learn how to make a screenshot for evidence. Press ALT+PRINT SCREEN then copy the image into a document.
- Ask your child to show you that she or he knows how to block people and how to report abuse to the people

who run the website. They can delete the accounts of those who have broken their rules.

- Explain to your child that if someone starts making nasty remarks that they should end the conversation without replying.
- If it happens more than once they should block that person.

MOBILE PHONES
Tell your child

- Don't respond to nasty calls or messages. The person sending the

message may not be who you think they are. They may be using a stolen phone.

- Get an adult to reply. Text back that the message may be reported to the police.
- Keep the messages and images. They can be used as evidence.
- They must show the text messages or images to you or their teacher even if they are embarrassing.
- Her or his friends must NOT give her or his phone number out to other people without permission.

MOBILE PHONES
If things go wrong

- Contact the network on behalf of your child.
- Tell them you are receiving nuisance calls and give them any details you may have.
- They can sometimes change your number for you and they will give you advice on informing the police.
- Buy a new SIM card. Only share the number with trusted people.

More information and advice can be found at:

- **Childline**   www.childline.org.uk
- **Digizen**   www.digizen.org.uk
- **Thinkuknow**   www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- **Childnet**   www.childnet-int.org.uk

TOWER HAMLETS