# Talking About Online Safety

The internet is an important part of many young people's lives. From school work to games, the online world is where many young people are spending an increasing amount of their time.  Empowering children to use technology safely and responsibly is essential now and it will become even more important as new trends and issues emerge.  Livestreaming has grown in popularity over the last year since the launch of services like YouTube Live and Instagram Live in 2016 which places additional demands on young people as they need to make good decisions 'in the moment' about what live videos they should broadcast for example.

Another concern is that technology embedded in children's lives can affect their wellbeing and mental health.  To support children, we need to ensure they both know how to recognise and avoid risks, but also how to promote their wellbeing and establish a healthy relationship with technology.

In order to support children understand and navigate the challenges they face, we need to talk to them …

1)      BE ENGAGED: Talk regularly with children about how they use technology.  Offer your advice and support and find fun opportunities to use technology together.

2)      BE AWARE: Learn more about the platforms your children use and the safety features available. You could always ask your child to show you what they like to use!

3)      BE THERE: The most important thing is to ensure your child knows you are there if something does go wrong.  Your child might be worried to discuss the issue they are facing; reassure them that they can turn to you no matter what.
 There are several websites to raise awareness of internet safety – www.saferinternet.org.uk is a good place to start and other links can be accessed from our website.

In the past, we have suggested the acronym PIES as a helpful reminder which is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| ☺ **P**ractical Principles | Talk with, NOT at your children. |
| | Agree family guidelines and rules. |
| | Regularly discuss online safety. |
| ☺ **I**nfrastructure | Virus and firewall software up to date. |
| | Browser 'safe search' enabled. |
| ☺ **E**ducation | Learn together about new technologies and enjoy! |
| | Reflect together about new technologies; the benefits, dangers & potential. |
| ☺ **S**ystems | Keep webcams in family rooms. |
| | Monitor the amount of time that children spend on the internet. |
| | View the 'History' or purchase filtering software. |
| | Have appropriate responses to problems – children may not tell you about |
| | a problem if they feel their access to the technologies will be restricted. |