

In this Spring edition we look at online safety, talking to your child about serious incidents like the refugee crisis, and give tips for developing healthy body image and lifestyle.

Online safety

On 9th February 2016, everyone was encouraged to play their part and #shareaheart for Safer Internet Day! To help 'spread the love', schools, organisations and individuals were asked to take to social media and share their own heart filled messages, images or videos using the hashtag #shareaheart.

Children get involved in online safety – one school's story

Every February the children of Hertford Infant & Nursery School join other schools in the global celebration of 'Safer Internet Day'. This year, the enthusiastic team of Year 2 Digital Leaders (DL) will once again be taking on the important role of leading e-safety teaching across the school, by taking an assembly, then in teams going into each class (including the nursery) to explain ways to stay safe when using the internet.

The children will encourage their peers to take part in the #shareaheart challenge, this year's special activity to promote respect and kindness when using the internet. The children's e-safety messages will be posted onto the school twitter account to share with the global community.



Internet safety is an important part of the new computing curriculum and with social media becoming so much a part of all our lives it is ever more important to equip children from a young age with the knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. It is also about ensuring they know how to behave towards others online – just like they would in the school playground.

"We find that the children respond so well to hearing the e-safety message from their peers and each year the teachers report back that the Digital Leaders have done a brilliant job" said Tracey Bowers (Digital Leader Teacher). "We are also planning for the DLs to help run a safety helpdesk at parents evening to spread the word to all the family."



Screen Time



Did you know that by the age of seven, the average British child will have spent the equivalent of a whole year of their life 24/7 in front of a screen and that 1 in 3 toddlers has used a smartphone or tablet before they can even talk? For most children technology is now part of their lives and has lots of benefits, but you can have too much of a good thing. The first dedicated Technology Addiction Service for young people has just opened in the UK and they are seeing first-hand the negative effect that overuse of digital technology can have on families, with some children as young as 4 years old being referred. So how can you keep children's screen time in check? Turn the page for some top tips...





★ Hot Topic: Online Safety - Top Tips for Parents

Experts recommend the following ideas to manage your child's screen time

- ★ Keep an eye on how much time they spend online. The recommended daily time is no more than 2 hours a day.
- ★ Are underlying problems making this worse? If your child is feeling upset about something else, they may be using the internet to help them cope.
- ★ Gradually change the amount of time your child spends online; reduce it by an hour a week to start with, tell your children in advance what the changes will be and stick to it even if they moan and complain.
- ★ Make an agreement to turn off the computer or smart phone at the same time every night or set limits on using devices until chores and homework have been done

- ★ Organise activities to make it more appealing to spend time offline.
- ★ Charge your child's mobile outside of their bedroom at night so they aren't tempted to use it when they should be sleeping. You could also turn off your Wi-Fi at night.
- ★ Know what devices connect to the internet in your home and how to use parental controls: your child might be accessing the internet via a neighbour's Wi-Fi, for example.
- ★ Set an example – adults need to stop themselves from constantly checking their phone or being on devices all the time instead of listening and talking as a family
- ★ As a family, try going cold turkey for a day a week and turning off all devices.
- ★ Give your children a set amount of hours per week for screen time and let them decide to divide it up – this gives them a sense of control & teaches self-discipline.

Adapted from 'Digital Parenting' issue 4 by Vodafone

Safety Net is running information sessions for parents on online safety in school and community settings. Please contact us for details - tel: **01272 42 09 73** or email training@safety-net.org.uk

★ Quiz: is your child spending too much time online?

Give a score to each question using the following ratings: 0 = Never or rarely true; 1 = occasionally true; 2 = usually true; 3 = always true

- ★ Your child is upset when you ask them to stop their screen activity to come to dinner or another activity
- ★ Your child asks you to buy a digital device such as an iPod after you have already said no
- ★ Your child has trouble completing their homework because they are busy watching television or playing video games
- ★ Your child refuses to help with household chores, choosing instead to play with screens
- ★ Your child asks to play a video game or other screen activity after you have said no
- ★ Your child does not get sixty minutes of physical activity each day
- ★ Your child does not give frequent eye contact to others in the home
- ★ Your child would rather play video games than go outside to play with friends
- ★ Your child doesn't really enjoy anything that does not involve screens.
- ★ If you restricted all screen use for one day, your child would be irritable and whiny.

Score of 10 and below: Your child is an average online user. S/he may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but seems to have control of their usage.

11–20: Your child may be depending on screen time too much. You will want to monitor their screen time more closely. **21–30:** Too much screen time is likely to be causing problems for your child and they may even be addicted to screens. You need to take some action or get advice.

From arlenepellicane: *The Happy Home*



★ Useful websites for parents

- ★ **Thinkuknow** - the place to start: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents
- ★ Vodafone Digital Parenting Guide www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html
- ★ **Common Sense** - Honest reviews of games, apps & films by parents and children: www.common sense media.org
- ★ **Family Lives** - Advice and support whenever you need it, online mentor available: www.familylives.org.uk
- ★ **Childline** - free, confidential calls for children. Online counsellor available 24 hours a day: www.childline.org.uk
- ★ **Helping Kids Stay Safer Online** - The NSPCC has joined forces with O2 to provide parents with online safety skills and tools: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

★ Parent Page: Your safety questions answered

A parent emailed us to ask: "I want to talk to my child about the refugee crisis but don't know what to say, what would you recommend?"

★ **Q: Should I even talk to my children about such upsetting things, like the refugee crisis or terrorist attacks?**

A: When terrible things happen, our first instinct is often to protect our children from them and this is totally understandable, but experts say it may not always be the best approach. Harold Koplewicz, President of the Child Mind Institute says "don't delay telling your children, as it's very likely they will hear about what happened anyway and it's best that it comes from you so you are able to answer any questions, tell them the facts and set the emotional tone". By talking about these situations, you are very unlikely to make it worse for your children but silence may prevent them from understanding and coping with it.

★ **Q: So how should I go about it?** A: Finding out what your child knows already, how they are feeling about it and answering any questions they might have in words they can understand, is usually the best approach. Often what they need is someone they trust who will listen to their questions, accept their feelings, and be there for them. You don't need to worry about knowing exactly the right thing to say. Just be as honest and straightforward as you can. Programmes like "Newsround" for children are also a good way of raising difficult news items, because they are covered in a child appropriate way.

★ **Q: Surely this is not a good thing to talk to an under 5 about?** A: At this age children tend to confuse facts with fears, so it's a good idea to limit their access to news and be careful about what you say. You can answer any questions that they ask, but you don't need to give extra details.

With older children aged 6 – 11, let your children lead the way; answer their questions as honestly as you can and try not to be overly dramatic or use frightening words. It is better for example to talk about 'people who do violent and bad things', rather than 'evil people'. You don't need to give



lots of details about what happened, just stick with the basic facts. Remember, it is okay if your children get upset when talking about scary or disturbing things. As a parent or carer, you can then reassure them that it's natural to feel like that and help them to feel safe and secure. It is still a good idea to monitor what children see on television at this age as the news often shows very disturbing images and victim accounts that can be too frightening for most children, particularly those under the age of 12.

★ **Q: My child is really anxious anyway, won't this just increase their anxiety?**

A: All children are different, and you are best placed to judge what will work for your child. Following these events, some children may have fears about things that we don't expect, like an attack on their home or something happening to their family. Take time to find out what they are worrying about let them talk about it and acknowledge that it's ok to feel scared, horrified or anxious. Reassure them that these things don't happen very often and that adults are working to catch the people who did it and prevent things like this from happening again.

★ **Q: I feel really angry about this myself, how do I handle that?**

A: Set the tone - try to stay calm as you talk about the events as children will take their cue from you. It is understandable that people feel angry, when people get hurt, but we need to discourage stereotypes and prejudice which can so easily grow from hate and fear. Use the opportunity to teach respect, empathy and understanding and explain prejudice. You could also think about the things you could do to be positive like raising money for a charity, standing up for others or supporting human rights. Visit the Unicef website for ideas about this: www.unicef.org.uk.

Adapted from BHCC guidance for schools.

★ **To suggest a safety topic** for us to cover or to make a comment, please email us at newsletter@safety-net.org.uk. For an online edition, go to our website: www.safety-net.org.uk. Visit www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk to find out more about the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

★ **Join our Editorial Team** - We are also looking for parents to join our editorial team; to give feedback on the newsletter and suggest topics. This could be via email, phone or coming to meetings at Safety Net Offices. It can be one or two hours a month or more if you have time.

★ Topics for the Term: Healthy Eating and Lifestyle

This term sees a focus on physical and mental health with Eating Disorders Week in February (22nd – 28th) and World Health Day on April 7th.

★ **Be sugar smart** Did you know that children are generally eating three times more sugar than recommended daily amounts? Get 'sugar smart' by downloading the new app from Change4Life to check the sugar content in everyday foods: www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/campaigns/sugar-smart/home - and check out the Brighton and Hove 'sugar smart challenge': www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BH_SugarSmartChallenge

★ Healthy Body Image

Children are increasingly influenced by pictures in the media of what an 'ideal body shape' should be. This can lead them to feel that their body is not the shape it should be which can in turn lead to low self-esteem and an unhealthy obsession with diet and exercise. By the age of 10, around a third of all girls, and 22% of boys, say how their bodies look is their number one worry. And 10 is also the average age when children start dieting.

Parents can help boost children's body image by:

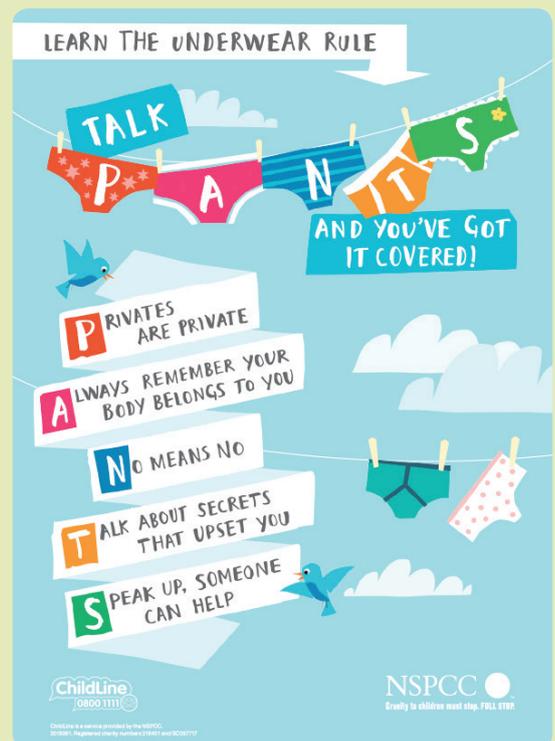
- ★ Helping children understand that their bodies will change and grow and that's normal
- ★ Letting them know that there is not one "ideal" body shape
- ★ Point out that models and celebrities are often air-brushed to make them look better
- ★ Watching what they say about their own bodies and the comments they make about other people's bodies
- ★ Avoiding stereotypes, prejudices, and words like ugly and fat
- ★ Helping children focus on their abilities and personalities rather than their physical appearance
- ★ Promoting physical activity and exercise which is proven to improve self-esteem and body image
- ★ Discouraging children from weighing themselves too often

Adapted from article on www.webmd.com

★ Talking to children about their bodies

The NSPCC Underwear Rule is a really useful way to talk to children about the fact that their bodies belong to them. It also reinforces the fact that no-one has the right to touch our bodies without our permission. This can be a useful conversation to have with children to give them skills to stay safer online if they are posting photos and selfies.

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/



★ Why not get away from a screen & get active instead?

- ★ Join in the **Brighton Chicken Run**; 5k for adults and 1 mile/500m for children, on Sunday 20th March at Hove Park. Visit <http://brightonandhovechick.wix.com/brightonchickenrun> for details.
- ★ Or you could try the **Mini Mile** on Saturday 16th April: <http://www.brightonminimile.co.uk/home>
- ★ Check out **Child Friendly Brighton** for things to do, activities and events: www.childfriendlybrighton.co.uk



Working with communities to keep children safe

Manor Offices, Emmaus, Drove Rd, Portslade, BN41 2PA
www.safety-net.org.uk ★ tel: (01273) 411 613 ★ @safetynetbthn
★ safetynetbrighton Registered Charity No. 1108772 Company Limited by Guarantee: 05319388
www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk ★ @LSCB_Brighton

This newsletter is sponsored by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

