

Our Ref: KH/HC/KeepingChildrenSafe
14th July 2023



Dear Parent/Carer,

Potentially harmful misuse of online devices

Barr Beacon School prides itself on providing a safe school for our pupils. We are, however, becoming increasingly concerned about the inappropriate use of the Internet by some of our pupils outside school. Inappropriate use has the potential to be harmful, and we ask for your support in assisting us with this challenge.

We can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work together to ensure that the e-Safety message is consistent. Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep safe and behave appropriately online. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring abundant opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. You may even find your children asking to engage with technology that you have no knowledge or experience of.

Most social media platforms including Tik Tok, Snapchat and Instagram have a minimum user age of 13; this is stated in the terms and conditions when creating an account. Please closely monitor any social media accounts that your child uses. As parents, you may already be having conversations with your child about the technology that they use.

Sexting

Sexting is the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

It is illegal to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18, even if you're the person in the picture. While police will always try to avoid treating sexting among children as a crime, they also need to focus on children's wellbeing, which can result in serious actions being taken. To support you in this, please visit the websites listed below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> - Visit here to find great advice on how to keep your child safe online

www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the "Parent/Carer" Section and use the "Click CEOP" button to seek advice

www.childnet.com – Visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date Security advice, age specific advice

<https://www.common sense media.org/> - Excellent advice about Internet Safety

What can parents/carers do to reduce the risks of being online over the summer holidays?

Ground Rules

Discuss as a family how the internet will be used in your house. Consider what should be kept private online (personal information, photos etc.) and decide rules for making and meeting online friends. Make sure you know what your child is doing online much like you would offline.

Online Safety

Install antivirus software, secure your internet connection, and use Parental Control functions for computers, mobile phones and games consoles to block unsuitable content or contact.

- Remember that parental control tools are not always 100% effective and sometimes, unsuitable content can get past them, so don't rely on them alone to protect your child.

Location

Think about locating your computer in a supervised family area. Always supervise the use of webcams in an application, which allows voice or video chat. Consider your child's use of other devices that allow internet access such as Mobile Phones and Games Consoles.

Dialogue

Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour with your child.

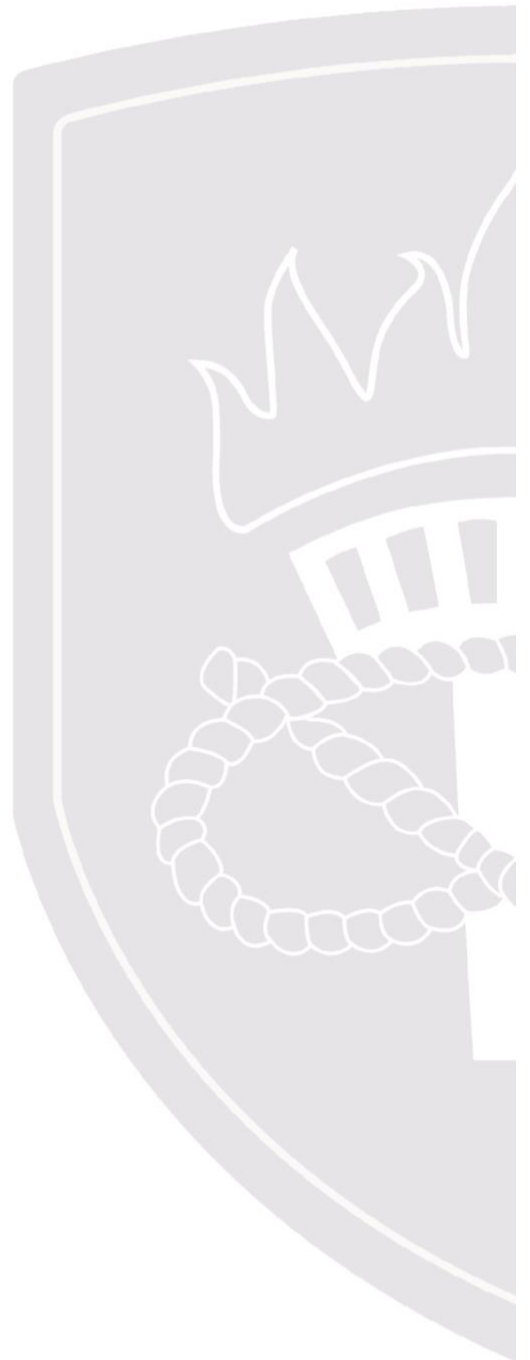
- Always ensure your child knows how to block or report people online who send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply.
- Make sure your child knows to tell an adult they trust if they see something online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable.
- It's essential to be realistic - banning the internet or technology will not work and it often makes a child less likely to report a problem. Education around safe use is essential.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation in keeping pupils safe when using technology. If you have questions or would like more information, please email postbox@barrbeaconschool.co.uk.

Yours sincerely



Mrs K Hibbs
Headteacher



Barr Beacon School
Old Hall Lane
Aldridge
Walsall
WS9 0RF
West Midlands



Matrix
Academy Trust
EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

0121 366 6600



Barr Beacon School



@barrbeacon.school



postbox@barrbeaconschool.co.uk

