

13TH MARCH 2024

# INTERNET SAFETY IN BALLINGARRY

# OBJECTIVES OF TONIGHT'S SESSION

- Identify how our children are using social media and the Internet
- Highlight areas of concern we as a school community have.
- Consider the role of pupils, parents and teachers in being safe online.

# REMEMBER

- The best parental control is parental involvement
- Acceptable behaviour online is much the same as acceptable behaviour in the real world
- Start early with children – it's easier to establish good practices than change bad ones
- Give children what they NEED, not what they WANT
- Instil a sense of caution, not a sense of fear
- Remember the good outweighs the bad

REMEMBER  
THE  
BENEFITS  
OUTWEIGH  
THE RISKS!

- While undoubtedly there are valid concerns about children spending too much time online, accessing inappropriate content, and communicating with people with intent to harm or exploit them: it is equally clear that the internet presents fantastic opportunities for children.
  - [Local History Collections](#)
  - [Encyclopaedias](#)

# TOP CONCERNS FOR IRISH PARENTS

*"...cyberbullying, spending too much time online, online grooming/exploitation and accessing inappropriate content."*

*Webwise // NPC Parenting Survey 2017*

# BALLINGARRY

- Problematic incidents are becoming more common.
- Some events have been quite serious in nature.
- As parents and teachers, we need to be more proactive - teaching the children about how to be safe online, rather than reacting after something happens.

# ISSUES THAT HAVE ARISEN IN CHRIST THE SAVIOUR NS

- These are the main areas of concern that teachers and parents have (at the moment):
  - Group Chats
  - Social Media Use
  - Cyberbullying
  - Overuse of technology/devices

# PROBLEM 1 - GROUP CHATS

- What's the problem?
  - Children not understanding good netiquette (spamming the group etc)
  - Unkind and bullying comments
  - Baiting/Goadng
  - Bystanders



# SNAPCHAT AND WHATSAPP

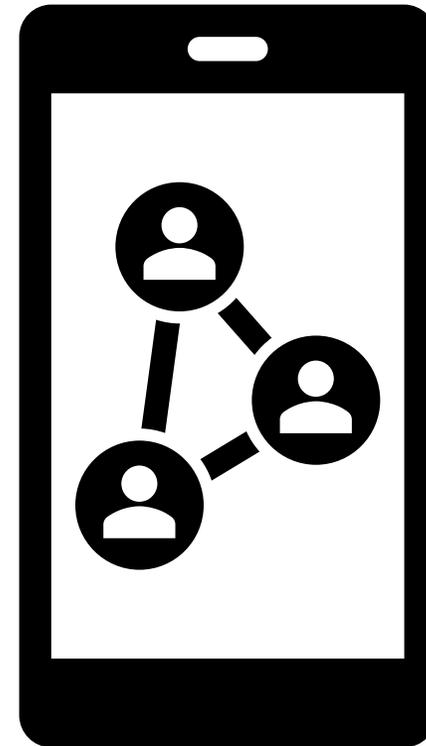
- Users must be 13. You must enter your birth date to set up an account, but there's no age verification, so it's easy for kids under 13 to sign up.
- [Common Sense Media](#) rates Snapchat OK for teens 16 and up, mainly because of the exposure to age-inappropriate content and the marketing ploys, such as quizzes, that collect data.
- What does Common Sense Media say about [WhatsApp](#)?
- Images disappear after being viewed.
  - This makes it difficult for parents and teachers to deal with incidents.
- There are risks for children receiving images.
- There are also risks for children saving/sending/forwarding images
  - Coco's Law – introduced to combat revenge porn

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Commit to Monitoring
  - Age of consent for group chats is 13 (with monitoring). If your primary-aged child is part of a group chat you are consenting and committing to monitoring
  - But how do we monitor Snapchat?
  - If we're honest with ourselves it's almost impossible
- Delete the App
  - All social media apps (including Whatsapp and Snapchat) are designed for over 13s.
  - By allowing your children to use these apps, you are allowing them to use tech that they are developmentally not ready for.
  - It is impossible to monitor or trace back what's happening in these groups, impossible to get to the bottom of things when an inappropriate/cruel comment is seen.

# PROBLEM 2 – SOCIAL MEDIA

- What's the problem?
  - Bullying
  - Compare and despair
  - Inappropriate content



- *"Children are exposed to harmful content on social media, ranging from violent and sexual content, to bullying and harassment. And for too many children, social media use is compromising their sleep and valuable in-person time with family and friends. We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis – one that we must urgently address"*
  - US Surgeon General Dr Vivek Murthy

# SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED

- Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- Examples of social media include:
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - Snapchat/ Snapmap
  - Tik Tok
  - YouTube
  - Gaming with communication between users
  - WhatsApp Groups

# DIGITAL AGE OF CONSENT

- Ireland introduced a digital age of consent to require companies to have different GDPR rules for young people.
- The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16, or with parental permission 13.
  - If companies are assuming there are no children on their platforms, they are not obligated to make their platforms "child-friendly" or "child-safe". They are assuming that their users are all over 16, or over 13 and supervised by parents.

# ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

- In theory this means that no children in our primary school would have access to social media.
  - As a parent/guardian, you must decide if they need access to social media before the age of 13.
- Recommendation from experts, and this school, is that primary school children should have no access to social media.
- If you choose to allow your children to have access to social media, responsibility lies with you.
  - How will you prepare and educate them to use social media responsibly?
  - How will you monitor social media use?
  - How will you engage with your child so they can talk to you about their social media use?
- We do not use social media in school and we will not be teaching the children about specific apps, other than general rules and guides for being safe online.

# INSTAGRAM

- What does Common Sense Media Say?
- Problems
  - Compare and despair
  - Unrealistic Beauty Standards
  - Unrealistic Sporting Goals

# YOUTUBE AND YOUTUBE KIDS

- YouTube on [Common Sense Media](#)
- YouTube Kids on [Common Sense Media](#)
- YouTube [Alternatives](#)

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Review apps BEFORE saying yes
- Make an informed choice - "Everyone else is using it" is not a good enough reason
- Monitor Monitor Monitor
- Spend time teaching your child correct behaviour online
  - Show clear examples of what is ok or not ok
- Make clear what your child should do if something unexpected happens
- Decide on consequences and stick to them

**DIFFERENT FAMILIES MAKE  
DIFFERENT CHOICES**

# PROBLEM 3 - CYBERBULLYING

- In our school we define bullying as any acts that are:
  - Hurtful
  - Deliberate
  - Repeated
- Because a negative comment or picture online can be viewed repeatedly, one incidence is considered bullying.
- Inaction implies compliance
  - Saying nothing is not an option



# CYBERBULLYING

- When we encounter bullying in our school we follow our anti-bullying policy, and our code of behaviour.
- Anti-bullying Policy
  - Bullying can have an extremely negative impact on children and adults.
  - Our policy is not about getting children into trouble, it's about getting the bullying to stop.
  - We cannot help if we do not know it's happening.
  - It is very challenging for teachers to police / investigate Internet use at home

# IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING



# WHAT CAN WE DO?



- Set boundaries and expectations
- Remind children that observing bullying and doing nothing, is a big problem
- Have consequences
- Be prepared to follow through on consequences.
  - If you are not happy with what's happening in the group chat, take your child out of the group chat.

# PROBLEM 4 - OVERUSE OF DEVICES

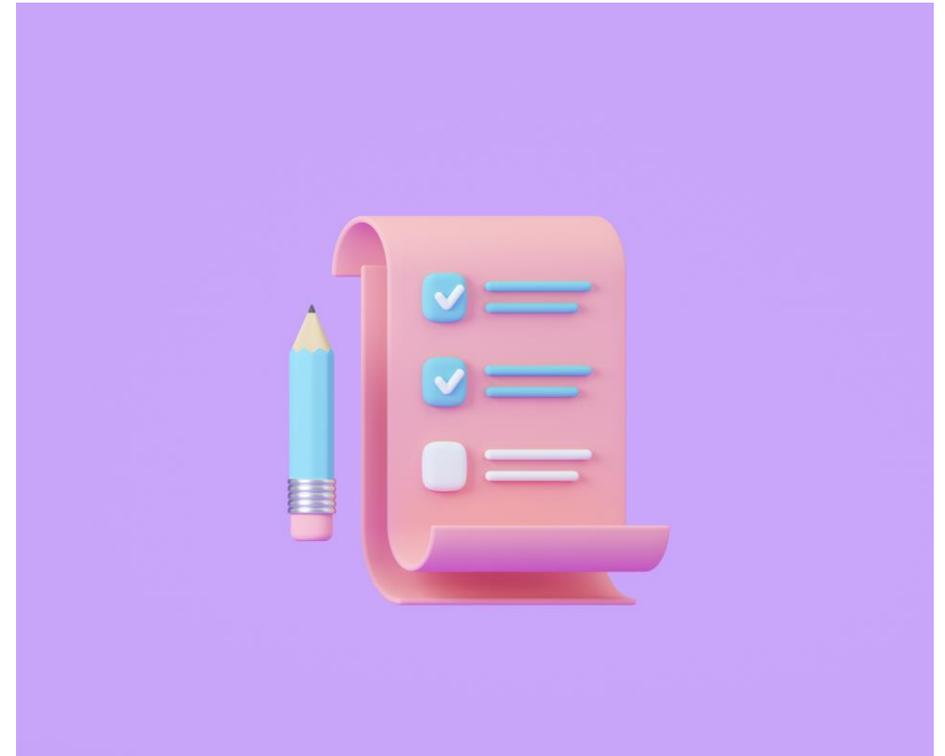
- What's the problem?
  - Tiredness impacting on mood and learning
  - Brain Chemistry



# OVERUSE OF DEVICES

## What do the experts say?

- No screen time for at least one, and preferably two hours before bedtime.
- Hours of sleep required by age:
  - Toddler (1-2 years): 11-14 hours
  - Pre-school (3-5 years): 10-13 hours
  - **School Age (6-13 years): 9-11 hours**
  - Teenager (14-17 years) 8-10 hours



# WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Decide how much is too much
- Agree limits
  - Time Limits
  - Apps – *Google Family Link, Screentime, Our Pact, Family Sharing, Digital Wellbeing*
  - [Webwise](#) show how to set up lots of parental controls
  - Use the in-built timers in apps and games
- Turn off auto-play and notifications
- Devices in communal Areas only
  - No devices in bedrooms (alarm clock!)
- Alternative Attractive Activities
- Walk the Talk
  - Consider adhering to the same rules yourself; or discuss with your child why adult usage is different.

**NOW WHAT?!**

# WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?



- Children need and want us to set boundaries
- Devices should be kept in communal areas. Why?
- Children should use family devices for as long as possible
- Children should not have access to social media in primary school
- So where does that leave us?

# KEEPING CHILDHOOD SMARTPHONE FREE

- [Department of Education Initiative](#)
  - Parent/Guardian Led Initiative
  - Would be set up through the Parents' Council
  - Not policed by the school

## Parents' Association Smartphone Agreement

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please review the attached Parents' Association Smartphone Agreement and if you wish to be part of it please sign and return this form to the school.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian:

As the parent or guardian of the above student, I have read the parents' association agreement regarding smartphones and I wish to be part of the proposed approach

I do not wish to be part of the proposed approach.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The parents' association respects each family's right to decide whether or not their children have access to the internet or a smartphone and there is no obligation to return this form if you do not wish to do so.**

# KEEPING CHILDHOOD SMARTPHONE FREE

## Pros

- United approach from families
- Recommended by psychologists and Dept of Education
- Reduces bullying instances dramatically in the school
- Emotionally and developmentally better for children

## Cons

- Social Media is still a problem if children have access to those apps via tablets
- Kids will still need to be taught how to behave appropriately once they get phones
- Supports for families whose kids already have phones



# ALREADY HAVE A PHONE?

- Record all passwords

	A	B	C	D
5	Email (Gmail)		<a href="http://www.gmail.com/mail">www.gmail.com/mail</a>	
6	Google Drive		<a href="http://www.drive.google.com">www.drive.google.com</a>	
7	TikTok		<a href="http://www.dropbox.com">www.dropbox.com</a>	
8	Instagram		<a href="http://www.instagram.com">www.instagram.com</a>	
9	Facebook		<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>	
0	Twitter		<a href="http://www.twitter.com">www.twitter.com</a>	
1	Snapchat		<a href="http://www.snapchat.com">www.snapchat.com</a>	
2	Youtube		<a href="http://www.youtube.com">www,youtube.com</a>	
3	Xbox		<a href="http://www.xbox.com">www.xbox.com</a>	
4	Roadblocks			
5	<b>My Phone</b>			
6	<b>My Tablet</b>			
7				
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# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

- [Set up Parental Controls](#) - Common Sense Media, Webwise, Google Family Link
- Delete Social Media Apps
- Have the Chat
- Agree Rules – create a contract
- Consider joining the Parents' Council's "Smartphone Free Childhood" initiative

**THANK YOU**