



Dear Parent/Carers,

With the Christmas countdown already in full swing, you will probably be getting hints from your children on what they would like to open on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

Many Christmas lists may include electronic devices such as tablets, smartphones or games consoles. Below are some hints to ensure that your child is able to use these devices safely.

- Go onto the settings section where you can restrict or disable features so your children cannot download unsuitable applications or content e.g. videos. A good site to support you with setting controls is: <http://www.internetmatters.org/>
- **Common sense media** have a list of recommended safe search sites for children allowing young internet surfers to investigate topics that they are interested in whilst protecting them from the information they are not ready to see.
- Many of our children use **You Tube** and in some cases have innocently accessed inappropriate content. There is an alternative... **the official YouTube Kids app** is described on their website as being "designed for curious little minds to dive into a world of discovery, learning and entertainment. This is a delightfully simple (and free!) app, where kids can discover videos, channels and playlists they love"
- Make sure that the account on the tablet is set up by a parent or carer, so that they can authorise content that is downloaded. This is important if they want to download any additional content called 'In App Purchases' (IAP).
- Look at the age ratings for APPs as many are not be suitable for young children. The same goes for access to popular sites such as You Tube, Snapchat and Facebook. **Common sense media** – has a free APP. You can type in the name of any App or game and brief information about them will be displayed.
- **Net Aware** [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk) provides information on any social networks that your child wishes to use.
- Talk to your children about using cameras and video chat facilities. If someone acts inappropriately, then make sure they tell you immediately. Also, ensure that they use these features sensibly and don't take unsuitable images and share them with people they don't know. Remember images shared on sites such as Snapchat can have screen shots taken of them and then shared more widely.
- If you are buying a smartphone for your child, talk to the mobile provider about parental controls. These controls might not be automatically switched on. Ensure that the mobile phone company knows that it is a phone for someone under 18 years of age – by law (2005) they have to put filters on them and this service is free. Alternatively you can look at the provider's website for support.
- Games consoles such as Xbox's and Playstations are very popular with primary aged children. The key issue with video games is the suitability of a number of titles as they are rated in the same way as films. Therefore, major releases before Christmas such as Call of Duty: Black Ops III (rated 16), Fallout 4 (rated 18), Star Wars – Battlefront (rated 16) all have 16+ ratings. A useful site to find about the content of games can be found here: <http://gamesratingauthority.org/GRA/>

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs M Smith Head teacher/Safeguarding Lead

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