As educators, we discuss with students the important issues about their use of Information and Communication Technologies, and the importance of keeping safe online. We often invite a member of SAPOL to come and address the students to reinforce the safety and legal aspects of online behaviour.

This should not be a 'one off' conversation.

It is also important for families to constantly remind children about the need to use technology safely and appropriately and to take time to be in touch with what their children are doing 'online'.

Below are a few things to consider when talking with your children about the choices they make while using technology…

Social Networking

More children seem to spend time using tools such as Messenger, Facebook and Instagram. The creators of some of these sites set out acceptable use policies, and set age limits on membership.

READ through their "Acceptable use" information **WITH** your child.

Appropriate ages set by some sites are:

Facebook – 13 y.o

Kik   – 17 y.o

Snapchat – 13 y.o

Instagram – 13 y.o

Flickr   – 13 y.o

TikTok   - 13 y.o

There are many children's sites which are a variation on Social Networking, thematically aimed at a younger age group. The same concerns about online chat and communications, apply here.

It is important to remember that even if you think a page is private, there are many ways for others to view, copy or download material your child has published.

Once it is out there, it is out there forever !

Publishing Online

With mobile phone / picture and video technology in everyone's pocket, it is important to remind children that taking and publishing videos and images of themselves or others may lead to friendship problems or even bullying issues. Think about how they would feel if an image or video of themselves was saved and used inappropriately !

Live Chat

Many Gaming sites and social networks have a 'chat' function. There has been enough media coverage to remind people of what can go wrong when a comment typed is taken the wrong way or something is typed in a moment of anger. These conversations are not the same as face to face communication, and the results can be very destructive.

Your child's privacy and safety should always be a top priority ! Ask them…

Who is online with you at the moment ?

How do they know these people ?

How can they tell if a user is really who they say they are ?

Do any users ever ask them personal questions or say things that make them feel uncomfortable ?

IF ALL ELSE FAILS…remember the 'EXIT' option

WEB SEARCHING

There have been some advances made in enabling children across a range of ages to search the WWW with less intrusion by unwanted content.

ALWAYS show interest in what your children are doing online, and ensure that correct levels of filtering are set on your browser.

Some search tools to look at are:

DuckDuckGo   https://duckduckgo.com/

GoGooligans   http://www.lures.info/childrens_search/gogooligans.html

Kid's Search Engine   https://kidssearch.com/

A website you need to read through AND view with your children:

https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Use the link above to visit this excellent site and look through the resources there.

There are a range of age-appropriate activities, and video clips are included to deliver a serious message and promote discussion between you and your children.

Use the site now, and again as your childrens' online habits change with age.

ANTI VIRUS

In this age of NBN, high speed broadband internet and rapid file sharing, it is essential that all computers use an effective anti-virus product. These can also aid in the prevention of unwanted pop-ups and blind links while online. Here are two examples of FREE products.

Ensure you download the <u>totally free version</u>, which is effective if kept updated.

www.avgfree.com.au

www.avast.com/free-antivirus-download

<u>**These FREE products are available for PC, Mac, iOS & Android **</u>