

Dear Parents/Carers,

We wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some important information regarding your young person's safety during this period. Many of our children will be at home due to the Coronavirus outbreak and, inevitably, that they will be spending more time online. This may be for school work or to make up for the loss of social interaction. The internet and the brilliant wonders it brings are going to be of incredible benefits to us during this unprecedented time, but the risks that particularly young people can face will still be present. As our young people become more reliant on the online world, in the absence of their regular world, we wanted to share with you some advice on keeping them, and yourselves, safe. Thankfully there are some simple steps that can reduce risk.

Online Learning

Our greatest concern is your child's safety and wellbeing and we have taken every step possible to ensure that everything we do enhances their safety and security. Please be aware of the following guidelines that all our staff are employing whilst setting work online.

Email

Staff will always use their work email to communicate with either yourselves or the young people. Our emails take the following formats staffname@saffronvalleycollegiate.co.uk or staffname.306@lgflmail.org If you receive an email claiming to be from a member of Saffron Valley staff that does not follow this structure please inform Gareth Denton (Gareth.denton@saffronvalleycollegiate.co.uk) who will support you in this matter. Staff will also only contact your young person through their school email. This has been sent out to all students. If they do not have theirs please email Gareth to resolve.

Students should access their email through londonmail.lgfl.net

Learning Platforms

Saffron Valley use a variety of online learning platforms to enhance students' knowledge and understanding. These include Doodle, Tassomai, MathsWatch and many more. Students details have been posted out and many students are already making use of these valuable resources. These are all secure and students have their own usernames and passwords. Staff are setting work specifically for each young person on these platforms and we urge you to encourage them to carry out this work.

Online Lessons

One of the most exciting new technologies is the ability to carry out some lessons "remotely" by either video or audio conference. We are actively trialling mechanisms for these and some students may be asked to take part in some of these lessons whilst we test the systems. To access the lesson students will need to click on a link that will be emailed to them. This can reassure you that the source of the communication is genuine. Additionally, we ask that students **do not switch on their cameras unless expressly asked to**. This protects their image and also makes the lessons run more effectively across the internet. For this system to work you may need to download software, links to this will be emailed as appropriate. All our online lessons will be recorded by the member of staff and shared on our learning platform for revision and later use.

Should you have any queries about this please feel free to contact Gareth Denton or your child's Head of Provision for more information.

General E-Safety Advice

1) Talk to your child about their use.

What are they accessing and why? Do they know how to keep themselves safe? We all need to talk to children about how they can keep safe and behave appropriately online. It's very important to remember that children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to unwanted or unpleasant content or comments online. 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. It may be very helpful also to locate your devices in a family room. Young people on devices in their bedroom are removed from supervision and far more susceptible to risks.

2) Be Aware of Age Restrictions

All the popular Social Media platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TicToc etc.) have a minimum age restriction of 13, and WhatsApp has a minimum age restriction of 16. Therefore, no Y7s and only some Y8s should have a social media profile. There are good reasons for this age restriction to be in place: inappropriate content, lack of maturity to use the site safely, exposing them to harmful content, risk of being contacted by sexual predators, creating an online profile which will be hard to remove in the future, placing added pressure on the child to deal with situations beyond their years, for example.

Games also have age ratings, known as PEGI, and please do check the ratings of what they are playing. Only allow them to play online games that are age-appropriate. **Remember the average age of an online gamer is 38 years old; there are far more adults playing these games than children.** If they are playing online games ensure they are playing with friends and people whose identity they can verify. I strongly advise that any in game communication, such as voice chat or video chat, be disabled.

3) Check Your Privacy Settings

As parents, you will need to be aware of the safety implications of allowing your child access to social media at such a young age. If you do allow your child to have a social media account, make sure you set the privacy settings to private and check your child's account on a regular basis.

The Communication Act 2003 makes it an offence to send anything on the internet that is offensive, indecent, threatening or false if the reason for sending it is to cause the other person annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety. It is, therefore, really important to ensure that our children are using the Internet in a responsible and appropriate way.

4) Protect Your Devices

Install antivirus software on any devices you use to access the internet. This includes phones, tablets and computers.

5) Set up Parental Controls

Almost all devices have a parental control function. A useful website to show you how to do all of this is <https://www.internetmatters.org/> 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. You can also install parental control software on devices that allows you to set what apps they can use and what the time restrictions are.

6) Be Honest and Open with Your Child

Most young people are far better with devices and technology than we are, so ask them to show you what they are doing. Ask them to set up some of the devices and to show you how to get the most out of them. By building that dialogue they will feel more comfortable talking to you if they ever find themselves in difficulties.

Websites for more information: www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the “Parent/Carer” Section and use the “Click CEOP” button to seek advice and report online abuse

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

www.parentinfo.org - Supported by CEOP

www.bbc.co.uk/onlinesafety

www.cybermentors.org.uk – Online support for children

www.childline.org.uk – Online support for children

<https://www.internetmatters.org/> - Explains how to set up parental controls on most devices and game consoles.

<https://www.common sense media.org/> - Bit like TripAdvisor for the Internet. Find out about Apps and Games and age restrictions. Please visit your School Website which will have further information on keeping children safe online

Yours faithfully



Gareth Denton

Online Safety Co-ordinator