E-SAFETY UPDATE   FCAT

The best we can be

1. Region's teenagers warned about dangers of 'sexting'   November 2018

Young people with smart phones need to be better educated about the dangers of sending sexually explicit messages and imagery.

An18-year-old, who's remaining anonymous and is calling herself Jane for this report, is issuing a stark warning to others after being tricked into sending naked photos of herself when she was just 14. She has joined Fixers, the campaign that gives young people a voice.

Link: http://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2018-10-04/regions-teenagers-warned-about-dangers-of-sexting/

2. Do pupils really need phones in school?

In June, Culture Secretary Matthew Hancock called on schools to ban smart phones during the school day. Apart from the problems with bullying that they bring, studies have also shown that mobile phones have a definite impact on working memory and intelligence — even if the phone is on a table or away from sight in a bag.

In other words, the pull of a mobile phone is often too strong to ignore and the result is checking them far too regularly and not concentrating properly on studies.

It's definitely something any adult with a smart phone can identify with as most of us carry them everywhere and check them far too often.

Phones have evolved so rapidly that they have become a behavioural issue in schools. Some schools will have a strict ban on mobile phone use during the day.

Matthew Hancock would like to see pupils aged 11 to 16 switch off their phones and put them in their lockers from 8.25am to 4pm. Parents would be told to ring the school if they want to contact their son or daughter.

While it might seem obvious that such a distracting device should not be available during the school day, it is also a fact that some teachers workwell with the technology. The game-based platform Kahoot!, for example, is free to use but is reliant on students being able to access mobile devices.

If a school has reduced computing facilities, mobiles can form a plank in its resources. The difficulty in allowing this is then how to restrict pupils otherwise.

We know that the internet has a real role in teaching our children but also has a worrying downside that needs policing and restricted use.

Parents will have their own opinions and may be influential in individual school's policies on this. One thing is certain about mobile phone use in schools, though: not having a policy and simply allowing pupils to use them whenever they want to is a recipe for genuine problems.

Link:https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/16891091.do-pupils-really-need-phones-in-school/

3. Facebook adds new tools to stem online bullying

November 2018

Facebook on Tuesday stepped up ways to battle bullying and harassment at the leading social network.

The initiative calls for new tools and programs to help users control "unwanted, offensive or hurtful experiences on Facebook," global head of safety Antigone Davis said in a blog post.

"Everyone deserves to feel safe on Facebook," Davis said.

Facebook users will be able to hide or delete groups of comments, including responses, instead of having to remove them one at a time, according to Davis.

The feature was rolling out on desktop computers and Android-powered mobile devices, and promised to reach versions of the application on Apple gadgets in coming months.

Facebook also began letting people report bullying or harassment on behalf of friends reluctant to complain to the social network themselves.

"Being the target of unwanted attention can be stressful and some people may not feel comfortable reporting a bully or harasser," Davis said.

"If you see a friend or family member being bullied or harassed, now you can report someone on their behalf."

A team at Facebook reviews complaints to determine whether reported posts violate policies at the social network.

An appeals process implemented earlier this year regarding photos, videos, or posts taken down due to hateful, violent, or sexually explicit content will extend to decisions regarding bullying, according to Facebook.

"You will soon be able to ask for a further review if you report a piece of content for bullying or harassment and you think we made a mistake in determining whether it violates our policies," Davis said.

Facebook is also testing ways to let users search for or block words considered offensive in comment sections of their posts.

A majority of US teenagers say they have been victims of online harassment or bullying, and that social media companies aren't doing enough to fight the problem, a recent survey showed.

The Pew Research Center survey found that 59 percent of US teens reported being bullied or harassed online, and 63 percent said it was a major problem for people their age.

"Name-calling and rumor-spreading have long been an unpleasant and challenging aspect of adolescent life," said Monica Anderson, the lead researcher for the Pew report.

"But, the proliferation of smartphones and the rise of social media has transformed where, when and how bullying takes place,"

Link: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-6232659/Facebook-adds-new-tools-stem-online-bullying.html