

E-SAFETY AND CYBERBULLYING TALK.

As the newly formed **Parent Forum** we were pleased to be able to organise an 'e-safety and cyber bullying' presentation for parents at school last week. Although take-up was low, the message was so good that we thought we would report back with the information for those who were unable to attend.

Presented by Simon Genders, Safeguarding Development Officer for LCC, the talk centred on how we can try to stay aware of what our technology savvy children are doing and who they may be talking to and meeting, and most importantly keep them safe. Some of the statistics were a bit shocking: in a survey of 14 year old children 79% use the internet without parental supervision, over 50% post personal information on Facebook and other networking sites, two thirds of children who answered said they had talked to someone they didn't know online and a *quarter* of those have gone on to actually meet the person ALONE!

Girls are more likely to post pictures and information about themselves online and many young people do not realise that even just the smallest bit of personal stuff can be used to piece together their whereabouts and movements by unsavoury characters. It can also affect career choices in later life as more and more employers do name searches online before offering jobs. A digital footprint lasts forever. School covers e-safety in the curriculum and many of our children have seen a video clip called 'Where's Klaus'. We would strongly recommend you have a look, it is a real thought provoker -

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/film>

Another very relevant one for our children about 'sexting' is 'Exposed' , view it at:

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/film>

For boys online gaming seems to be used more often and they create avatars to interact and chat to other gamers worldwide, the issues of personal safety are the same, just who is behind the avatar may not be who they think!

Simon's best advice was to **BE INVOLVED, BE INFORMED, BE VISIBLE** when your children are using the internet, gaming, mobile phones, wii etc. Check up regularly who they are talking to and what information they are giving. If they can't do it in front of you maybe they shouldn't be doing it!

As technology threatens to leave us behind and our children know far more than it is our job as parents to teach them to use this wonderful tool responsibly and protect themselves. Make them aware of the issues and to use the technology safely. And should things go wrong let them how to report abuse both online with the CEOP Report button available on all sites and to you, another adult or school.



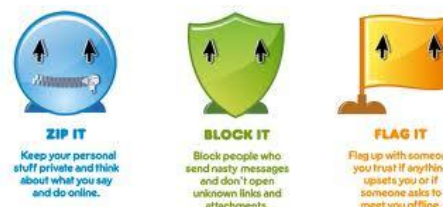
Should you be concerned about any issues regarding cyber bullying please contact the school immediately or seek help from one of the many child protection agencies.

For some great tips on e-safety try:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.direct.gov.uk/clickcleverclicksafe



One last thing: are you aware that the legal age to register for Facebook is 13? Peer pressure can be huge but our children are falsifying their age to get online.

The Parent Forum are a group of school parents formed to bridge the gap between school, the Governors and parents. We all have, or have had, children at St. Martin's. We are looking for other topics and issues to tackle so if you have any which you would like to discuss please contact us via the school office for a chat.