



Online Safety Newsletter

December 2018



“BEING THE BEST ME I CAN BE”

Birley Spa Primary Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy

A Message from the Online Safety Coordinator

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the first edition of our regular online safety newsletter. We aim to bring you all the latest information and advice on helping to keep your children safe when they are using online services such as mobile phones, gaming and social media.

With the weather getting colder and Christmas just around the corner, the thrill of games is very appealing at the moment. Video games and online gaming has changed dramatically recently, which can present issues to many parents who may not understand or appreciate the content contained within them.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful. If you have any concerns or suggestions please get in touch.

Mr Simon Ingram

Deputy Headteacher & Online safety Coordinator

Musicaly & TikTok

A lot of our older children are accessing TikTok and Musicaly to record videos and live stream. Both of these have an age rating of 12, so should not be being used yet. However we know it is not as easy as that! Many children have a ‘public’ account, which means anyone with the app can view these videos, like them and send private message. Although most people using this app are totally innocent and enjoy the opportunities it creates, we have heard of strangers messaging our children. There is the opportunity to block people, but that means the person could just message someone else. Please be vigilant on what your children are doing on these apps and remind them to tell you if anyone they do not know is messaging them or is saying anything they do not like.

For more information, visit our website
www.birleyspaacademy.co.uk



Advice on Apps

A really good tip for your children downloading apps is to have one family account where everything is downloaded from. This allows you to monitor exactly what is being downloaded and accessed. This can be set up with one email address and will not cost anything extra!

Contact Us

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Follow us on Twitter @birleyspalead

Games & Online Gaming

Games were previously designed with one audience in mind—children. But things have moved on radically since then. Games are now developed to deal with the real world and not just fantasy worlds. They deal with incredibly complex social, emotional and political issues. Many role models in games now glamorise law breaking and settle their differences with violence and terror using incredibly bad language.

If you are unsure whether a game is suitable for your child, there is a system in place to help—PEGI. If a game is rated as 18, it is for adults. It is not just the actual gaming but the issues raised. Also, adults will be playing alongside your children in the game if they are playing online, talking about things you may not want your child to hear.

There are also other concerns with gaming.

Excessive gaming, especially late at night can affect concentration levels during the school day. Playing games late in the evening can make it more difficult to settle at night. **Violent and adult** games can lead to inappropriate play in school with their friends.

Blurring of fantasy and reality can be common as many games are set in the real world. Children can come to see this as normal and acceptable behaviour and do not fully understand the implications. It can promote violence, negative attitudes towards women and the temptation to recreate situations in games.

Useful Websites and Apps

pegi.info—Your source of information on the body that rates video games

commonsensemedia.org—A website which rates many of the games your children maybe playing. It is an American website .

NetAware App—Lots of useful information on apps and websites.

ceop.police.uk—where to report any suspicious online activity

For more information on online safety, visit our website www.birleypacademy.co.uk



What our Children Think

Recently, we have undertaken various focus groups based on what our children are doing online. We talked about what the children enjoyed doing online and what their biggest worries were.

KS1—Like— gaming, TT Rockstars, YouTube, Fortnite / Worries—cyberbullying, swearing

LKS2—Like— Fortnite, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Muscialy / Worries—Hacking, privacy, falling out with friends

UKS2—Like— WhatsApp, Fortnite, Netflix, YouTube, Fifa, Instagram, Snapchat, Roblox / Worries—strangers, cold calling, swearing, hacking, cyberbullying

We will explore these in our next newsletter.

Digital Sunset

Join us in the Spring Term for the Digital Sunset Challenge. Devices go down at 7pm until 7am every day for 7 days. Feel the benefits of taking a break! It is vital we let our brains 'switch off' at night in order to recover and grow. Choose a time and a place you can put your devices away and choose something else—maybe a board game, baking or make a model together before you go to bed! Let us know how you get on!



We value your voice and would like you to join us on our journey of improvement

