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Dear Parents/carers,

As part of our work on anti -bullying this week, we have been talking to the children about cyber - bullying and how to be Super Digital Citizens. We have discussed the types of bullying that can take place online and how to deal with it. The children have been keen to share with us their experiences. I taught a lesson to year 5 and 6 yesterday and nearly every child in that class had a story to share where they had experienced something online that made them uncomfortable. Many could share with me stories that their younger siblings had also had with inappropriate language and unwanted attention.

We have taught the children over the years to speak up and tell a grown up when this happens, and they know that is the right thing to do. However, many children honestly told me today that they reported the offences straight to the admin of the game or blocked another user and hadn't told an adult at home. They felt if they told a grown up then they wouldn't be able to continue playing the game. Although it is tempting to completely stop internet access for children, this is usually counterproductive. The internet is so ingrained in everyday life that children need to develop their skills, under adult guidance, to use it safely and efficiently. Withdrawing access tends to lead to children finding ways to use it secretly and to not reporting inappropriate behaviours.

The children have shared with us some of the games/apps they use online, especially in upper KS2. These included:

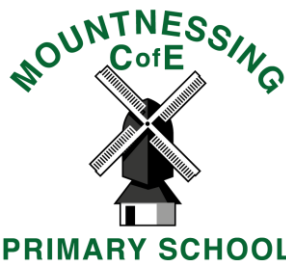
- Roblox
- Fortnite
- Among Us
- Mine craft
- Snapchat
- Over watch
- Pixel Gun 3D
- Tik Tok
- Whatsapp

I can't stress enough how important it is to understand what your children are playing, how to report any unwanted behaviour online, and to be able to ALWAYS see and hear what your children are doing when they are using the internet. Create an open relationship with your child so that they can share any problems with you and solve them together.

Many of these games seems innocent and for children, but they can be far from this. Today the children discussed the issues they encounter in the chat options and the ability to communicate with others in the game.

It is so important to play these games yourself and to understand what options are available to the children. Make them user friendly by turning off certain elements of the game (such as interaction with others, chat and friend requests) and create an open dialogue with your child. Make sure children only play/chat to people they have met face to face. Parents should ask children to tell them who contacts are/ who they are playing with. Children don't always understand difference between online friends and real friends.





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You can find some useful parent guides from a fantastic website called National Online Safety <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/hub/guide?page=1> You can create a free account and get regular monthly updates from them. I have attached some of their guides that may be relevant to our website here: <https://www.mountnessing.essex.sch.uk/online-safety/>

I also really recommend following the 'Two Johns' <https://esafetytraining.org/resources/parents-carers-area/> or by liking their Facebook page 'EST E Safety Training'.

We will continue to speak to the children about these issues and teach them how to be safe, but we need parents and carers to work with us to protect them.

Please visit these other pages for more information:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)

Stay safe online,

Mrs Holly Obank
Head Teacher