Cardinal Newman Primary School,

Arch Rd,

Hersham,

Surrey

KT12 4QT   27th September 2020

Good morning Mrs BURNHAM,

Many thanks for allowing me to spend the day with your students, staff and parents on Wednesday. It was great to see so many parents online for the evening session.

I would like to congratulate the children on their behaviour; they were so engaging and excited it made for an excellent day, especially in these uncertain times.

As promised, here is a short summary of the sessions and some points you may like to share with parents.

It was not surprising to ascertain the number of students who have their own mobile phone, tablet, Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, Alexa or laptop. We know that most homes have access to the internet and we are now at the stage where most children have their own devices.

Some of the children were clearly spending a very long time on the devices and it is always disappointing to hear some of them say that they were not going to bed until after 9:30pm, with some continuing on their tablets and phones whilst in their beds beyond that time. I understand how difficult some students will be at school the following day. Perhaps suggest to parents that all charging occurs overnight in either the parents' bedroom or in an area downstairs.

If parents are purchasing devices for their children, I would recommend they put controls in place before handing them over to their child. If a child already has the device then it works better when the child is part of the process.

Please would you remind the students to cover up the camera lenses on their devices. Perhaps an activity at school could be designing the stickers for this purpose.

Please find below some advice for parents and carers to share with their children.
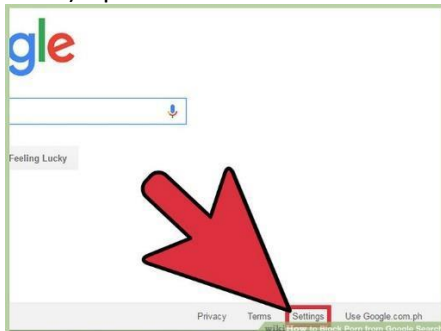
Passwords
We would always like to see students and their parents using passwords which are twelve digits, with each containing a number, a capital letter, a lower-case letter and a symbol/punctuation mark in them.

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child protection specialists **associates** online • education • investigation
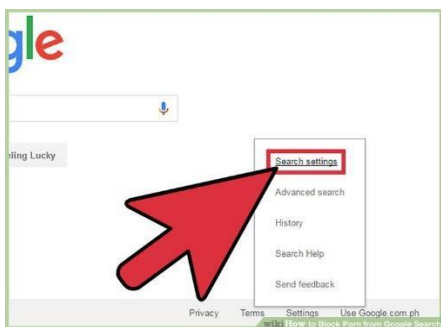
Google SafeSearch

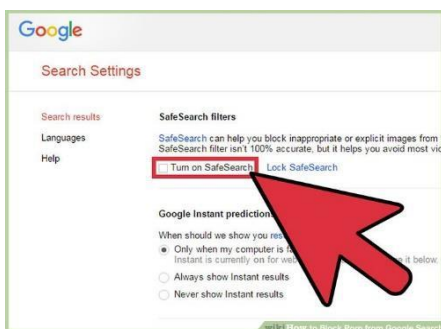Turn on SafeSearch by completing the following:

1) Open the web browser

Visit Google and open its settings.
Once the page loads, click on "Settings" on the lower right- hand corner of the web page. A menu will pop up
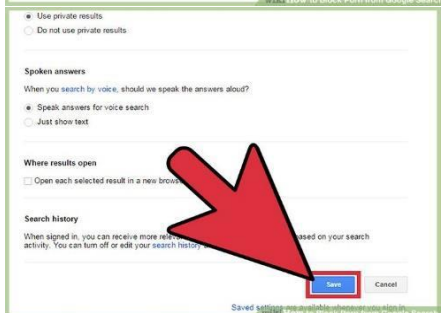

Select "Search Settings" from the pop-up menu.
This will open Google's search engine options.

Turn SafeSearch on.
You'll find an option called "SafeSearch" on the upper portion of the Search Settings page. Click in the checkbox on the option below it labelled "Filter explicit results." This will block all pornographic contents from appearing in your Google search results.

Save your changes.
Scroll down the Search Settings and click on "Save" to save all the changes you've made.

Company Registration No: 08428128

Test your filter.
Go back to Google.com and try searching for a
pornographic website. You'll notice that no porn sites or any contents related
to it will appear on your Google search results anymore.

TikTok

TikTok lets you make and share music videos and its popularity has surged among children and young
people, spawning its own young stars.

To create their own music videos, your child can select the song they wish to use in their video first,
then record themselves miming along to the music for up to 60 seconds. Alternatively, users can
record their video first and then select a song. They can then edit it and add special effects to their
clips.

Because TikTok is an unmoderated live streaming app, parents should be aware that users can be
viewed and contacted by others, including people they do not know. There have been reports of
requests for images of a sexual nature from strangers commenting on children's videos.

Users can report abuse by tapping on the three dots icon (…) within the app and following the
instructions. To block, go to the user's profile, click the three dots icon in the upper right-hand corner
of the screen.

We would recommend that parents check the settings to ensure the account is set to private and make
sure that YouTube and Instagram are not connected to the account. Additionally, please check that
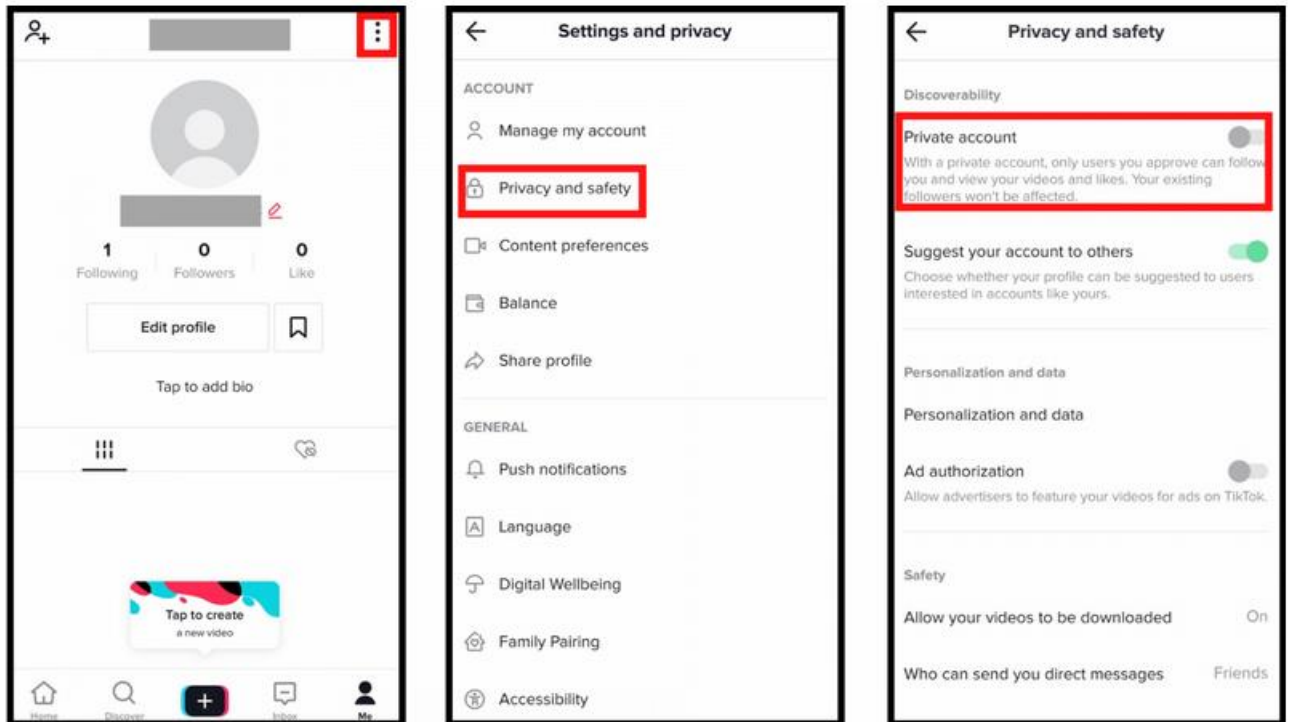this is switched off:

The platform is famous for its viral challenges some of which have been deemed potentially dangerous or
addictive.

Parentzone have provided the following advice for parents relating to TikTok:

How to make an account private

One of the main concerns parents often have about social media is that their child might be contacted by
strangers who might not have their best interest at heart. By making an account private, other users must be
approved before they can see and interact with your child's content or contact them. Here's how to set it up:
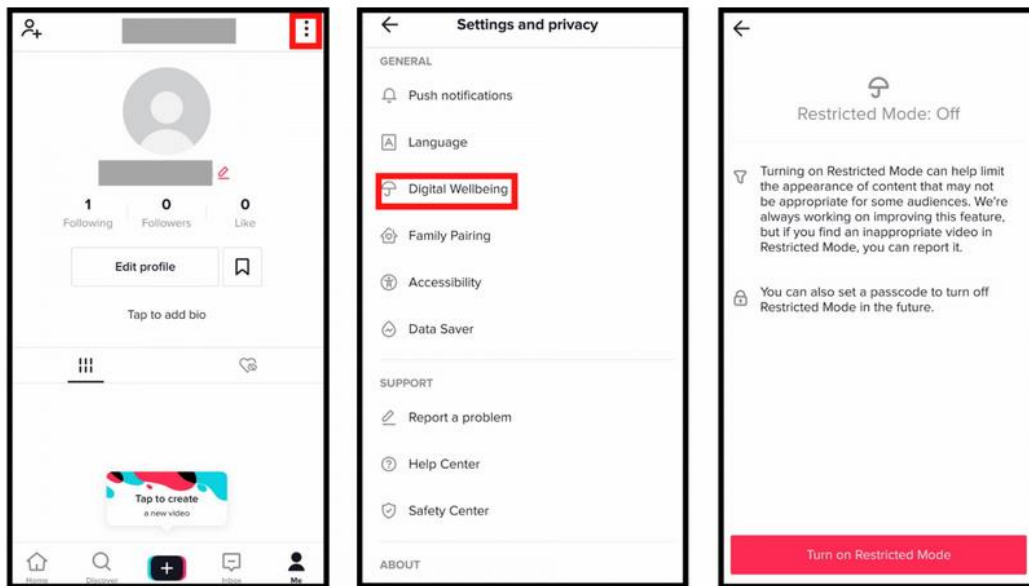
- Go to your child's **'Account'** section and tap the **three-dot menu** in the top-right corner of the screen.
- Select **'Privacy and safety'** from the 'Settings and privacy' menu.
- Toggle the **'Private account'** slider at the top of the page.

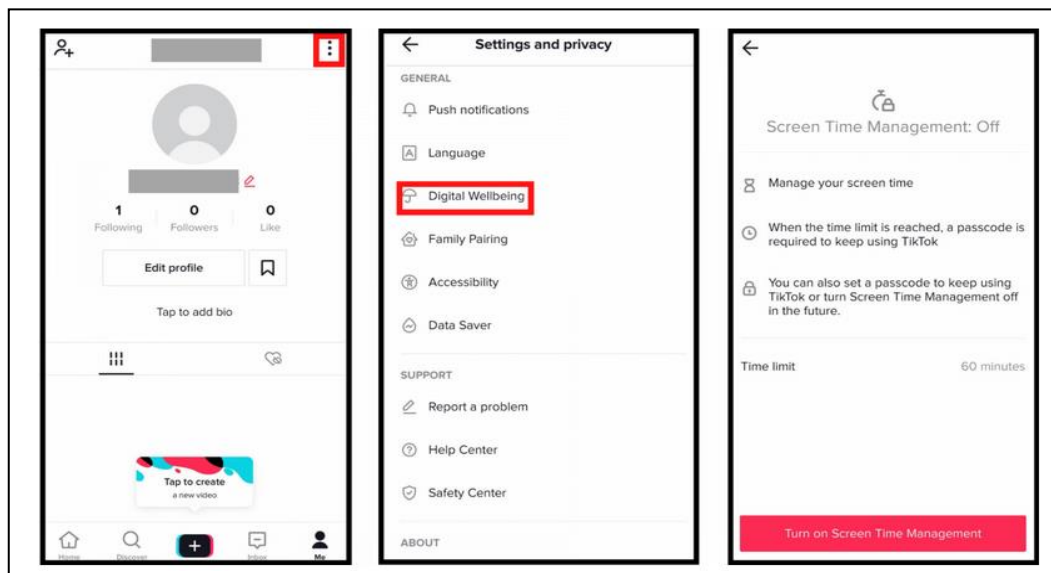**How to filter out inappropriate content**

TikTok is moderated and content that does not uphold its community guidelines is continuously weeded out. But if you want to further minimise the risk of your child stumbling across mature content, it's a good idea to enable 'Restricted Mode'. TikTok does not explicitly say how this works, merely that it "limits the appearance of content that may not be appropriate for all audiences". To enable it:

- Go to your child's **'Account'** section and tap the **three-dot menu** in the top-right corner of the screen.
- Select **'Digital Wellbeing'** further down on the 'Settings and privacy' menu.
- Go onto the page for **'Restricted Mode'** and tap **'Turn on Restricted Mode'**.
- You'll then be asked to set a **password** you need to enter to disable it again.

You can also limit the time you child spends on the app

- Go to your child's **'Account'** section and tap the **three-dot menu** in the top-right corner of the screen.
- Select **'Digital Wellbeing'** further down on the 'Settings and privacy' menu.
- Go onto the page for **'Screen Time Management'** and tap **'Turn on Screen Time Management'**.
- You'll then be asked to set a **password** you need to enter to disable it again. If you've already enabled 'Restricted Mode', it'll be the same password.

Snapchat

Many pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have Snapchat, which is aimed for people over the age of 13 years. Many of them said that they used their own pictures as profile images.

Snapchat is a popular photo-messaging app that allows users to take photos, record videos, add drawings and send them to their friends. A message on Snapchat only appears for a few seconds, but once you click away or the time limit expires, it has gone permanently. Snapchat's tagline is 'the fastest way to share a moment' - the speed of communication is Snapchat's selling point.

The main features are:
- Stories
- Live stories
- Memories
- Snap maps
- Streaks
- Filters

Snapchat states that young people under the age of 13 years are not able to create an account. However, there is no age verification in place when signing up to the app, allowing underage children to sign up by giving a false date of birth.

By default, only 'Friends' can make direct contact or view a user's story. This can be changed to a public profile, which means anyone can view a user's stories and Snapchat users you haven't added will be able to send you images and messages.

Snap Maps allows snapchat 'friends' to see where your child is. The locations are quite accurate, even revealing the street you're on. It is advisable that your child's geo-location should be kept private by disabling location for Snapchat in settings or switching on 'ghost mode'.

Instagram
A lot of pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 also have Instagram, another account for people over the age of 13 years. This really is not appropriate for children of such a young age. Some of the young people stated they had followers who were people that they didn't know. This is clearly a safeguarding risk.
The main features include:
- Stories
- Live
- TV
- Reels
- Activity

The activity feature allows you to see the time your child spends on the app.

The stories feature allows the stories to **disappear after 24 hours**.

YouTube
Children and young people love YouTube. Some just like watching the clips – anything from opening boxes to music videos to cute cat videos.

Young people are influenced by YouTube influencers. It is worth asking who they follow and why they are influenced by them. An influencer as young as 8 years of age can earn millions of pounds or dollars just by promoting goods.

YouTube has simple parental controls to restrict access to adult content, strict community rules about posts and an easy process to report illegal, harmful or upsetting content. But there is still a chance

your child will come across content you would not want them to, including religious and extremist propaganda. That is why it is important to encourage them to think critically about anything they see on the platform. The content may not be true or have come from a verifiable source.

To open an account or post content, you need to be 13 years old. However, you can watch content at any age. For children under 13, there is an app, YouTube Kids, (https://www.youtube.com/kids/) with content specially curated for a younger age group.

WhatsApp

Another app parents are increasingly aware of because they use it themselves is, WhatsApp. It allows groups of users to have a running conversation and post pictures.

Children and young people use it to share images, organise homework and generally chat with their friends and they can communicate with anyone in their contacts list who has the app. In May 2018, its minimum age was raised to 16 years in Europe, including the UK, following the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR.)

There have been reports of bullying and inappropriate contact with children by adults on the app. It is unmoderated so young users will need to know how to block upsetting or illegal contact and report users within the app themselves.

Popular games that children like to play:

Fortnite

In Fortnite, players collaborate to survive in an open-world environment, by battling other characters who are controlled either by the game itself, or by other players. Violence is cartoonish, but some characters and scenes might disturb younger players.

The single-player or co-operative mode (played with friends) involves fighting off zombie-like creatures. But Fortnite's most popular mode is its standalone free-to-play multiplayer platform, Fortnite Battle Royale, in which up to 100 players enter an online game, competing individually or as part of squads of up to four, to be the last player standing within an ever-decreasing battle arena.

To play, players create an account by providing an email address, which they will have to verify, and create a username. There is no age-verification process.

Why is Fortnite so popular?
- It is free, and available on a huge range of devices - PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, PC, Mac, iOS and some Android devices too.
- The gameplay is simple but extremely immersive. Multiplayer games last up to 30 minutes, and players can quickly re-enter a new game, making long sessions extremely easy.
- It is attractively designed and, with weekly updates and challenges, it's constantly evolving.
- In-game currency - V-bucks - allows players to complete challenges for rewards.
- It is culturally huge, with a massive social media following (via video and streaming apps like YouTube and Twitch), so children might feel left out if they don't play.

Age restrictions

Because of its frequent scenes of mild violence, Fortnite is rated 12+ by PEGI, Pan European Game

Information. But as with many games of this type, plenty of children younger than 12 *are* playing, so it is important that parents are aware of the safety concerns that have been raised, and how to help their children play safely.

Steps you can take to safeguard your child

- ☐ If opening an account, it is important that they do not create a username that could give away any personal details. There is also no age verification process. Therefore, be aware of the risks if your child has, or wants to, open an account.

- ☐ Fortnite offers three levels of privacy settings:

  - ➢ Public, where anyone can enter the child's online party

  - ➢ Friends, where only friends can join a party and

  - ➢ Private, which means that no one can enter the child's party without being invited by the child themself. Discuss the level appropriate to your child.

- ☐ Fortnite also allows for Voice-Chat to be disabled. Make yourself and your child familiar with the game's settings and, if you deem it inappropriate, turn Voice-Chat off.

- ☐ Speak to your child about unwanted contact and tell them what to do if someone speaks to them in a nasty or inappropriate way or asks them for personal information. Ask them to come to you if they are unsure about unwanted contact or have be exposed to something inappropriate.

Minecraft

Minecraft is one of the world's most popular games, especially with children. Like lots of popular sites, apps and games, Minecraft's terms and conditions specify that it is for over 13s. This is because of US privacy legislation which requires parents of under-13s to sign permission before any data about their children can be collected. In the UK, if children under the age of 13 play Minecraft, it is a violation of the site's terms and conditions.

Despite the age restriction, which as we have seen is to do with the legal position in America, Minecraft is very popular with primary school children. There is nothing about the game itself that's inappropriate for children, in fact, it's often been described as a 'virtual Lego'. Users explore landscapes and worlds and build their infrastructure from materials they find on the site.

As with any online activity, there are some safety concerns to keep in mind for parents and carers who have a young child who plays Minecraft. It is good practice for parents/carers to:

- ☐ Set the account up through their own email address and know their passwords – at primary age, this is not an unreasonable thing to ask.

- ☐ Discuss which settings they are going to apply prior to their joining the site – will they allow multiplayer, for instance?

- ☐ Speak to their child about unwanted contact and what to do if someone is being nasty or inappropriate to them in the game. Ask that they come to them if anything goes wrong, so they can make it stop.

Roblox

Roblox is a platform for user-generated content. This means all of the games and experiences on

Roblox are created by the players themselves. Once a player has signed up and chosen their avatar, they are given their own piece of real estate along with a virtual toolbox for building. By creating cool stuff, players can earn "Robux" (the virtual currency on Roblox) to buy avatar accessories, additional skills in-game, or more tools and materials to build with.

As the largest growing social platform for play, Roblox gives players a safe, moderated place to meet, play, chat, and collaborate on creative projects. If so inclined, they can even go on to learn how to build and code immersive experiences for others, all at their own pace.

Rocket League
Rocket League is a vehicular soccer video game. Described as 'soccer, but with rocket-powered cars', Rocket League has one to four players assigned to each of the two teams who use rocket- powered vehicles to hit a ball into their opponent's goal and score points over the course of a match. The game includes single-player and multiplayer modes which can be played both locally and online, including playing across different platforms such as PlayStation and Xbox.

Xbox and PlayStation
Some pupils in year 3 through to 6 are playing Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto and Assassin Creed. They know the characters that are in them and quoted some of the scenes. These games are for age ?? and contain significant violence. They are not remotely suitable for primary school children.

Of course, some are playing age appropriate games as well. Below is a summary of the games that I would recommend you share with parents. For those boys and girls who stated they were playing the games I would like to suggest you invite the parents in and show them the clip I shared with staff and those parents that attended last evenings session.
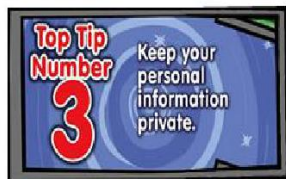
Facts and tips

It may be worth reminding parents to enable parental controls at home both on their router and the devices that children are accessing. Parental controls can be found on the website of their internet service providers and are simple to implement. (BT, Virgin, Sky, TalkTalk etc.).

The device settings can be found on YouTube by entering the device name and 'Parental Controls'.

Add the app What3words to yours and your child's device. Every 3-metre square of the world has been given a unique combination of *three words*. It is used by the emergency services to locate people quickly and effectively.

Teach children about Sid's Tips and the SMART rules.

Additional tips for parents would be to:

a) Activate the **advert blocker** or download one to stop the annoying and in some instances inappropriate ads that come up on the web browser - adblockplus.org

b) Bookmark the favoured websites of their child in order that they can safely watch that content which is appropriate.

c) When a parent is looking to get their child to finish their game let them know when there is 30mins, 20mins, 10mins left so that they are in the process of finishing off part of the game. Telling them to stop without a warning of time could lead to frustration!

d) The CEOP and Childnet YouTube channels have some useful films for parents to watch with their child. These should be watched in a 'fun' way. Think about it as the child's time to teach their parent and perhaps eat ice-cream or popcorn as if they were at the cinema.

e) There are new resources for 4-7 year olds called 'Jessie and Friends' and for 7-10 year olds called 'Kara and the Smart Crew', which are really good.. The films are fantastic for you to watch with your child.

f) As so many young people are playing online games, we would urge parents to play the game with them. It is the source of a lot of frustration with children that their accounts are 'hacked' and their money or content removed by unknown third parties. If parents are involved in playing, they will have a better understanding of how and where issues can arise and children will find it easier to seek help from them if necessary.

g) Disable In-App Purchases on the device the child is accessing.

h) Gaming

> Take an active interest in the games your children are playing to get to grips with how they work and why they enjoy playing.

> Ask who they play with online, who they meet and talk to, and talk about what kind of language is being used. Make sure your child knows how to do report abusive or anti-social behaviour.

> For younger children, use 'airplane' mode settings on your tablet or smartphone. That way, they can play offline without making accidental purchases or connecting with someone they don't know.

> Use PEGI ratings and App store ratings to ensure your children are playing age-appropriate games. Help children understand why some games are allowed and others aren't.

> Gaming can be very addictive, so agree boundaries and how long they're allowed to play for and with whom they are allowed to play online with. Remind them that people may hide behind fake profiles and not be who they say they are.

> Teach your children to protect themselves by thinking critically – remind them not to share personal information and to keep gaming friends in the game only rather than adding them to their other social networks.

i) Visit the **ParentInfo** website (http://parentinfo.org). The content is from both CEOP and Parentzone and will help with various apps and platforms.

j) It is essential that if a child informs a parent/carer that something unpleasant or hurtful has occurred online that the parent/carer does not react negatively or show disappointment towards their child. Any negative reaction is likely to discourage future engagement. The child should be congratulated for telling the parent/carer about their concern.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards,

Sharon

GirlingHughes Associates Ltd.