

UK Safer Internet has completed research to find that the number and incidences of abuse have increased in the first quarter of 2017. This is in the instances of peer-to-peer abuse involving harassment in private messages within popular apps/online games. Recent stories of the **Letter X** and **Blue Whale game**, which incites players to negative actions has been prevalent in the media. This has in itself inflated the impact of such games. The Blue Whale game originated as fake news but led to copycat behaviour amongst young people. Incidences of bullying and victimisation are happening as early as primary school.

Nspcc has shown that:

- **5,653** child sex crimes committed against children in **2016/17** had an **online** element.
 - In the last 12 months the Police in England and Wales have recorded on average **15** child sex offences a day that involved the **internet**.
 - **13** was the most common age of the targeted child (where recorded)
 - Nearly **100** offences were committed against children under 10. The youngest child recorded was 3 years old.
- It is a tricky subject, but it is important that your children feel confident to come and talk to you about any issue. Children and young people still need support and guidance when it comes to managing their lives online and using

the internet positively and safely. So here are some conversation starters you can have;

- ☞ Ask them about the sites they visit and what they enjoy doing?
- ☞ Ask them about how they stay safe. What tips do they have?

Ask if they know where to go for help, where they can find safety advice, privacy settings and how to report and block others. Recent scare stories about Snapchat and the location snap map are best dealt with by explaining how to go into ghost mode in the settings. Snap map is an add-on. The **eSafety commissioner Julie Inman Grant** said the location services tool had benefits as it allowed parents to know where their children were.

- ☞ Think about how you use the internet. How could you use the internet together or as a **family activity**?

Things to consider...

Keeping safe

- How safe is our personal information?
 - Do we have strong passwords? Eg capital letters, symbols etc
 - Do we all have usernames that don't reveal our full names?
- Have we considered parental controls which would be right for our family?
- Have we discussed online friendships and whether we can trust them?
- Do we need a family email address?
- Who will we talk to if we feel uncomfortable about anything we have seen or heard online or on a mobile phone or gaming device?
- When is it okay to download files, games or apps?
- Have we checked the reviews and ratings for apps and games?
- Which websites are okay for us to use?
- Should we open links from people we don't know?

Social networking

- Do we know the age requirements to be on social networks?
- Who can I post photos of online?
- Do I know why it is important for my accounts to be private?

Gaming

- Which age rated games can I play?
- Am I aware of why PEGI is important?
- Can I play online with people I don't know?

Positive online behaviour

- How can I be a good friend on the internet?
- What will I do if I receive frightening or bullying messages?

Healthy lifestyle

- How long can we spend online?
- Do we spend the same amount of time enjoying our offline activities?
- Where can we use our devices around the house?

Examples

Suggested ideas for an agreement with younger children.

We agree to...

I will use my tablet for _____ mins a day

We will make sure the children's favourite games are bookmarked for them to get to easily

Who is responsible for this?

Isabel and Phoebe

Mum and dad

Suggested ideas for an agreement with pre-teen children.

We agree to...

I will tell mum and dad when I see something that worries me

We will put parental controls in place but review it as the children grow up

Who is responsible for this?

Jack and Tom

Mum and dad