WEBWISE POST-PRIMARY PARENTS ONLINE SAFETY TALK

SLIDE 1: Welcome
Welcome to the Webwise Parents Introduction to Online Safety talk. This talk is designed to help parents to support their child to be safe, responsible and positive online.

SLIDE 2: Brief introduction
Explain how long the talk will take and the types of things you will be doing over that time.

For example
'This evening we are going to talk to you about some common concerns parents have around online safety. This one hour talk will look at topics such as screen time, cyberbullying, social media and we'll also do some group activities. The aim of the talk this evening is to give you an introduction to the topic, give you some tips for talking to your child, find out what supports are available and how to access them.'

SLIDE 3: What do we know about the parent's top concerns
The top online safety concerns for Irish parents are:
- Cyberbullying;
- Their child being exposed to pornography;
- Their child encountering hateful or racist messages or activities;
- Their child's self-esteem being impacted by something they see online;
- Being contacted by a stranger for sexual purposes;
- Damaging their reputation either now or in the future (online reputation/digital footprint)

SLIDE 4: What do we know about the children's negative experiences online?

The most common experiences that upset them are,

- People being nasty to each other;
- Bullying;
- Inappropriate/disturbing videos/ photos;

The research also shows us that many children's don't tell if they encounter something that bothers them online. This shows the importance of encouraging regular conversations, and helping to ensure that children do ask for help if something bothers them online.

SLIDE 5: Group Discussion Activity – The benefits of the Internet
While undoubtedly there are valid concerns about children spending too much time online, accessing inappropriate content, and communicating with people with intent to harm or exploit them: **it is equally clear that the internet presents fantastic opportunities for children.**

Ask the group '**What do you think are the main benefits for children from using the internet?'** Sample responses: Learning, communicating with people, developing new skills – coding, creativity, etc.

SLIDE 6: Video - Talking to your child about what they do online.
CEO of National Parents Council; Áine Lynch on the importance of talking to your child about what they do online. Click the Link to play video: https://vimeo.com/191045340 Please ensure pop-ups are enabled on your computer. Video will play on vimeo. Alternatively videos can be accessed on the Webwise.ie/parents page.

SLIDE 7: Time online / Screentime
Are you concerned about how much time your child spends on their phone, tablet, or computer? We've put together a guide for parents to help deal with this tricky issue. It is important to remember that children often welcome time-off from social media and games and can welcome clear guidelines and boundaries in this area.

How much is too much?
Unfortunately there is no magic number, children use their devices and computers for lots of different reasons – to learn, to play, and to socialise. If you are concerned your child is spending too much time online, the most important thing is to agree clear rules on screen time and set a good example.

Here are some helpful Pointers

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- Agree a clear set of rules with your child on screen time in the home. Talk to your child on when and where you think it is appropriate to use screens. Agree times when screens are allowed and when they are not allowed in the home. We suggest dinner time, homework time and bed time is a good start to the not-allowed list.
- Restrict the use of computers and devices in the bedroom. Depending on the age of your child you may want to set a curfew or ban devices from the bedroom completely.
- Avoid conflict over time online – it can be helpful to give your child 10 minute, 5 minute warnings before the end of their time online. Display Family Agreements in the home to help reinforce the rules and be ready with alternative for when their time online is over.Try not to rely on screens too much to keep the kids amused. It can be easy to encourage them to pick up the tablet or play a game on the computer to keep them occupied. This only confuses rules on screen

time, try and stick to the agreed rules with your child and remember to set a good example.

- Chat to your child about what they do online and encourage them to use their screen time for learning and education. Help your child find good quality content online for example RTE Junior, National Geographic, BBC Bitesize

- Encourage your child to develop healthy digital habits by setting boundaries around screen time and promoting a balanced lifestyle. Make time for offline activities, such as being outdoors, hobbies, and family activities, to ensure they strike a healthy balance.
- Don't have screens always on in the background. Turn off TVs and computers when not in use, these can be distracting for kids if they are trying to participate in another activity.

- Do as you say. Modelling behaviour is the most powerful way you can influence your child's behaviour.

- Finally, join in - why not set some time aside to play your child's favourite computer game and discover the online world together.

SLIDE 8: Video - Dealing with conflict around technology use in the home

Child Psychologist, Dr. John Sharry offers advice on how parents can deal with conflict around technology use in the home
Click the Link to play video: https://vimeo.com/200805499
Please ensure pop-ups are enabled on your computer. Video will play on vimeo.
Alternatively videos can be accessed on the Webwise.ie/parents page.

SLIDE 9: Technology use – helpful resources

There are lots of useful resources to help support parents to strike a healthy balance.

- Every family is different, and has their own unique circumstance and the **Webwise Online Safety Agreement Template** is a great way to discuss technology and the internet, and agree rules that work for your family.

- The **Webwise Online Safety Topic Generator** is also a great way for families to have a chat about the opportunities and challenges online. It brings up a range of different questions that can be a fun way to begin the discussions with your child.

- There are also **Talking Points**, that have been created by Irish teens to have those conversations with their teenager. These are a great support as sometimes it can be hard to know how to start the chat.

SLIDE 10: At what age should I allow my child to use social media?

One of the most common questions from parents is at "what age should I allow my child to use social media?"

There are a number of key considerations:

AGE RESTRICTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA – WHAT I NEED TO KNOW

- Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement, for the majority of these services it is 13 years old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. However most social media platforms do not have robust age-verifications in place making it relatively easy for underage users to sign-up with a false age.

- Under the E.U General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Ireland has now set the Digital Age of Consent to 16 years old. This is the age at which children can legally consent to companies/organisations processing their personal data or information for example when you sign up to an online platform or social media account. For children under the age of 16, consent must be given/authorised by the parent or guardian of the child. **For the purposes of data collection teenagers between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign-up to social media services.**

What are the Key Things to Think About?

Ultimately, you need to decide if your child is equipped to deal with the social pressures that arise from social media. The pressure to 'fit in' and/or to 'be popular' can be intense. Romance, group dynamics, and bullying can contribute to create choppy waters that even adults find difficult to navigate.

Here are a few considerations on the topic.

1.Firstly, agree an appropriate platform that you are happy for your child to use. It is more than likely that if your child wants to use social media, they probably have a platform or app in mind that they wish to access. Take time as a parent to review the app and decide if it is inappropriate service for your child to first use. Some things you may want to check out before agreeing anything with your child are: is there privacy settings? Who can my child communicate with? Is there potential for harassment or accessing inappropriate content? Ensure you and your child understand how the platform works, how to report and manage privacy settings.

2. Open Communication
Sometimes a child may not speak to a parent about a bad experience they have had online because they fear that you might solve the problem by keeping them off their favourite app or platform, or they may feel embarrassed or even that their bad experience is somehow

their own fault. However, if they feel they can talk about their online habits with you, without judgement, or the threat of being disconnected it will lead to more honesty in the long run. In order to open up the channels of communication with your child over their social media use, don't be too critical of their online experience or the sites they may want to sign-up to. Reassure your child that if anything happens that they are not comfortable with for any reason, they should not be embarrassed or afraid to come to speak to you about it.

3. Ask them about what type of information they think is private on social media. It is very important that your child understands how privacy settings work and the need to review them regularly. For young children, parents should regularly engage with them on social media use – for example parents should be aware of how much time their child is spending on social media and who they may be talking to. It is a good idea to let them know that even with the tightest privacy controls, content posted online can be easily copied and shared with audiences they can't control. A simple rule for younger children should be that the child should not give out their name, phone number or photo without your approval.

4. It's a good idea too to talk about your child's friends list. "Friends" is the catch all term for any contacts on social media. Sometimes, in their desire for popularity, young people become too relaxed about who they'll accept as 'friends'. Talk to your child about accepting friends requests from people they do not know online. Encourage your child to review their list of online 'friends' regularly, so they are sharing their information only with people they trust.

5. Be sure to put emphasis on the fact that they should NOT reply to any unwanted or unsolicited messages.
Although it may seem obvious, often scam artists or predators use messages which draw responses from young people. So it's good to make sure your child knows how important it is to ignore them and to speak to you if something bad happens.

Slide 11 – Social Media – Talking Points
If your child is using social media there are a few things you should talk to them about.

- **Not everyone is who they say they are online.** Remind your child that people online may not always be who they claim to be. Encourage them to be cautious when chatting with others, never share personal information, and always come to you if something feels off or makes them uncomfortable.

- **Talk to them about what information is OKAY to share**, and what information should be kept private.

- Our activity online forms part of our digital footprint. **Talk to your child about how everything they post, share, or comment on online contributes to their digital footprint.** Remind them that once something is online, it can be difficult to remove,

so they should always think before they post and consider how it might affect their reputation in the future.

- Explain to your child that **being anonymous online doesn't mean there are no consequences for their actions.** Encourage them to be kind and responsible and remind them that online anonymity can sometimes be used to hide harmful behavior.

- Just as they would offline, **remind them of the importance of being a good friend online too!**

- **Talk to your child about how online pressure**—whether from friends, influencers, or trends—can affect their choices and self-esteem. Encourage them to think critically before engaging, unfollow accounts that make them feel bad, and remember that they have control over their own online experience. Remind them that real friendships and self-worth aren't measured by likes or comments.

- **Help your child understand that setting boundaries online is just as important as in real life.** If something feels uncomfortable, they have the right to say no, ignore, or block someone. Remind them that true friends will respect their decisions, and they never have to share or do anything online that makes them uneasy.

Slide 12: What is a digital footprint?
A **digital footprint** is the trail of data you leave behind when you go online. This includes everything from social media posts and comments to search history, online purchases, and even private messages. Your digital footprint can be **active** (content you intentionally share) or **passive** (data collected about you, like tracking cookies). It shapes your online reputation and can impact things like job opportunities, privacy, and security.

Ensure your child's online experience is a positive one with these tips to managing your online reputation:

1. **Check your settings**
Some of the most popular social media platforms are set to public by default, meaning everyone can see our photos, what we are sharing or talking about. Regularly check your privacy settings across your accounts and apps. We recommend a 'friends only' option for your online profiles.
2. **Do the search**
Do a quick search for yourself online, if you find something you don't like report it with the website or social media platform requesting the content be removed.
3. **Create strong passwords**
Social media changes so quickly, it can be easy to forget about old accounts we've signed up to. If you're not using an account delete/deactivate it, this can help avoid risk of accounts/profiles being hacked.
4. **Be kind online**

What we do online can follow us around, ensure you make a positive impact. Whether it's starting a blog, raising awareness for something you care about … the possibilities are endless!

5. Think before you post

Before you share, comment, like, or post anything… ask yourself if this is something you want everyone to see? Use the THINK model if you're unsure about posting something online >>> Ask yourself is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Illegal? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?

SLIDE 13: What is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that takes place online. It can happen at any time and doesn't require face-to-face interaction, making it persistent and far-reaching. The most common type involves receiving harmful or inappropriate messages, but it can also include spreading rumors, sharing private images without consent, or posting hurtful comments. Because cyberbullying is constantly evolving, it's important to talk to your child about it early—ideally when they first go online, transition from primary to post-primary school, and regularly thereafter.

Online bullying can take many forms, including targeting someone's appearance, sexuality, or identity. Understanding what constitutes cyberbullying is key to helping children recognize, prevent, and respond to it effectively.

Definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in the Department of Education's Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

"Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society."

Online bullying can happen to anyone. It's always wrong and it should never be overlooked or ignored. You know your child better than anyone else. It means you are best placed to identify and deal with any cyberbullying they may encounter.

SLIDE 14: Activity – How to deal with cyberbullying

Ask the group to read the scenario on the slide and provide suggestions about how to respond to the situation.

SLIDE 15: Dealing with Cyberbullying
Now we will discuss some helpful ways that you can support your child.

- Praise your child for coming to speak to you about the problem. Sometimes that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. Try to stay calm and not overreact. Reassure your child by reminding them that many people have had similar experiences.

- The first thing to do is to listen. Listen supportively, don't interrogate your child. If they come to you looking for help, they have demonstrated trust in you. Be careful not to damage that by losing your cool or taking action that they are uncomfortable with. At the same time you should make it clear that in order to help them you may have to talk with their teachers and the parents of other children involved.

- Once you have established that bullying is taking place, you should get in touch with your child's school or youth organisation. If the cyberbullying is very serious, or potentially criminal, you could contact your local Gardaí.

- Schools have a particular responsibility to address bullying. Talk with your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti- bullying policy. All schools must have an "Anti – Bullying" policy. You should familiarise yourself with your school's policy, so you know the steps to be taken if required.

- Encouraging your child to talk to you about cyberbullying is key to maintaining an open and positive environment which can help you deal with the situation. Responding negatively by barring internet use or taking away their mobile phone or other device can damage trust and may also put you out of the loop if cyberbullying happens again.

- Help your child to build his/her confidence and self-esteem in other areas. This can be supported through your child engaging in out of school activities, such as sports, music or art activities. If your child is very distressed it's important that they have someone with whom they can speak. A professional counsellor might be able to help. Childline offers a listening support service for children.

SLIDE 16: Dealing with cyberbullying
What Advice Should I Give my Child?

- **Don't Reply:** Young people should never reply to messages that harass or annoy them. The bully wants to know they have upset their target. If they get a response it feeds into the problem and makes things worse.

- **Keep the Messages**: By keeping nasty messages your child will be able to produce a record of the bullying, the dates and the times. This will be useful for any subsequent school or Garda investigation

- **Block the Sender:** No one needs to put up with someone harassing them. Whether it's mobile phones, social media or chat rooms, children can block contacts through service providers.

- **Report Problems:** Ensure your child reports any instances of cyberbullying to websites or service providers. Sites like Facebook have reporting tools. By using these, your child will be passing important information to people who can help eradicate cyberbullying

Children need to understand the emotional damage cyberbullying, and all other forms of bullying, can cause. All forms of bullying hurt, all cause pain and all should be stopped. By stressing this to your child – and by emphasising the importance of not standing by while someone else is being bullied – it will encourage them to be more responsible and considerate internet users.

SLIDE 17: Inappropriate Content

Another concern parents have around their child's use of the internet is encountering inappropriate content.

This can be upsetting for children so it is important that parents are aware of the risks and how to deal with issues that may arise as their child explores the internet. It is also important that parents understand that this is an ongoing process, so regular conversations with their children will ensure they are more likely to have positive experiences online and be better equipped to deal with any potential negative content. Harmful content could include material relating to sex, violence, discrimination, and mis and disinformation. While not explicitly prohibited by law, this kind of material could, in the context of certain individuals, result in harm.

There is a general acceptance amongst parents and educators that exposure to harmful material can often give rise to false and distorted beliefs about the world. Children tend to believe everything they read online. They assume that the same checks and regulations that apply to printed works also apply to online content. Most children use the Internet for schoolwork – often this can be project work done at home. They need to be helped to develop strategies to cope with the knowledge and the influences introduced by the Internet

Here are a few talking points to help start a conversation on what to do if your child encounters something unpleasant online

Violent Content
Children may come across violent content online, whether in games, on social media, or video sites. Encourage them to talk to you if they see anything upsetting. Advise them to close the device and come to you right away. Parents should check game age ratings and content before allowing access. Inappropriate content can also be reported to the platform.

Online Pornography
Children may accidentally or intentionally encounter pornography online. Explain that pornography is not a reflection of real-life relationships, without your intervention there is a chance that they will see it as a blueprint for relationships in general.

Promoting Hate
The internet is a powerful tool for spreading messages which can be a good thing but has potential for encountering online abuse and hate speech. It is important that your child understands what to do if they come across upsetting material or speech. Young children should be supervised while using the internet. Tell them if they see this type of content, to show it to you and talk about it. As a parent you can report the content with the site host it may also be a good time to review parental controls.

Unreliable Information
Unreliable information online includes false, misleading, or biased content that can spread quickly and influence opinions or decisions. Parents should encourage their child to question sources, cross-check facts, and think critically to help them recognise unreliable information.

SLIDE 18: Critical thinking tips
With so much information online it can be hard to know if what we are seeing, reading or hearing online is accurate and reliable.

By encouraging your child to STOP, THINK, CHECK when they are online, it will help to develop their critical thinking skills to question the accuracy of what they encounter online.

Here are some simple tips:

Check the source – check the source of the story, is it a credible, reliable source? If you can't find the same information from other sources, it might be inaccurate, unreliable, or outdated. This is especially true if the information seems overly topical or sensational.

Look beyond the headline - Headlines are meant to grab your attention, but they can't tell the whole story, and neither can a brief social media post. If it seems too good (or bad) to be true, it likely is.

Sometimes pictures lie. - Don't assume that a picture or video is giving you the whole story. If a picture or video has been altered or simply used out of context, then it can be easy to draw the wrong conclusions.

Just because something is viral or trending doesn't mean it's accurate. - Disinformation is often created to trigger strong emotional reactions, encouraging immediate sharing or "liking" in moments of outrage, excitement, or disbelief. Social media and messaging apps make it incredibly easy to spread information quickly to large groups of people.

You are what you like? Be aware that what you see online has been tailored to your preferences, and online algorithms filter what content you see, *and* what you don't see, in

order to try to hold your interest. If a piece of content is being highlighted by an online platform, why might that be? It is because you are likely to be interested in it?

SLIDE 19: Video – Talking to your child about online pornography

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist Colman Noctor offers advice for parents on talking to your child about online pornography.

Click the Link to play video: https://vimeo.com/200804644
Please ensure pop-ups are enables on your computer. Video will play on vimeo.
Alternatively videos can be accessed on the Webwise.ie/parents page.

SLIDE 20: Video – Talking to your child about sexting

Dr. Elaine Byrnes explains why teens may get involved in sexting and offers advice on how parents can talk to their teen about image-sharing.

Click the Link to play video or click the picture on the screen:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT1qnpNE-8c Please ensure pop-ups are enables on your computer. Video will play on vimeo. Alternatively videos can be accessed on the Webwise.ie/parents page.

SLIDE 21: Coco's Law
Sharing intimate images without consent is illegal under Coco's Law.
The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law) created two new offences which criminalise the non-consensual distribution of intimate images:

1. It is an offence to distribute or publish intimate images of a person, without consent and with intent to cause harm.

2. It is an offence to take, distribute or publish intimate images of a person without consent even if there is no specific intent to cause harm.

Importantly, this applies even if the person initially gave consent for the picture to be taken, but they were later shared with other people without their consent.

SLIDE 22: Image-Sharing – Talking Points
Image-sharing can be a big concern for parents. It's important to make your child aware of the risks of sharing online and how to protect themselves.

Having regular conversations with your child on these topics is key. Here are a few conversations starts to help parents speak to their child.

1. What is personal information?

A good way to start this conversation is by choosing a well-known public figure and discussing what you both know about them. Then, ask your child what they don't know. Do they know this person's phone number, home address, or personal thoughts? What kind of details would their family know that their friends or the public wouldn't? This can help illustrate the difference between public and private information.

2. What types of things are okay to share online?
Listen to what your child says and talk to them about the type of content you would be uncomfortable with your them sharing. Make sure you specifically talk about photographs. Be very clear on the types of photo you would be unhappy with them posting. Discuss the importance of being a good digital friend by not sharing images or other personal information that might hurt or embarrass their friends or peers.

Did you know? Remind your child that pictures and video contain a lot of information other than just what you see (metadata) that we may not be aware of. This metadata can include your location, this can be disabled in the location settings on most devices.

3. What would you do if someone asked you to do something online that you are not comfortable with?
Peer pressure can often influence what type of photos young people post online, encourage your child to be themselves! This is also a good opportunity to let your child know that they can come to you if they encounter anything negative online.

4. Is it possible to create a fake profile online?
It is important that young social media users understand that people may not always be who they say they are. Remind them that is very easy to set up a fake social media profile. It is a good idea to go through privacy settings of social networks and encourage them to use a friends only setting for their social media profiles.

5. Would you share a photo of someone online without their permission?
Young people may not realise the consequences of sharing harmful images of others without their permission. Ask your child how they would feel if a photo or video of them was shared without their permission. Discuss the consequences of when sharing goes wrong. Remind your child that once something is shared online they lose control over where it can go.

One of the most important things parents can do to help their child online is lead by example. If you are prepared to walk the talk, let your child know that you would not share photos of them without their permission and you expect them to do the same. For tips on sharing photos of your kids, go to: https://www.webwise.ie/parents/oversharing-online/

SLIDE 23: Video - Be in Ctrl

The Be In Ctrl video address criminal aspects of online activity , online grooming and

webcam blackmail. Click the Link to play video: https://vimeo.com/154299804

The purpose of this video is to inform young people that this behaviour is a crime, raise awareness of how to protect themselves online, where to find help and support and to give them Ctrl!

Use this video to start a conversation with your child about ways they can protect themselves online.

SLIDE 24: Protecting yourself - Criminal Aspects of Internet Safety

The online sexual coercion and extortion of children is a crime. It occurs when someone a child has only met online asks them to send sexual photos and/ or videos, or perform sexual acts via webcam. The offender may ask the child to keep the contact secret, threaten to post the photos or videos on the internet or share them with the child's friends and family if the child does not send more or pay money.

When targeting a minor, offenders have two main motivations:
1.   A sexual interest in children, where the objective of the extortive exchange is the procurement of sexual material (photos and/or videos depicting the child) or a sexual encounter offline.
2.   An economic interest, where the objective is to gain financially from the extortion.
(A combination of both is also possible.)

- A lot of teenagers don't realise that it is very easy for anyone to **set up a fake profile online** and what many teenagers may not be aware of, is the **ease with which fake videos can be broadcast online** to make it appear that you are speaking with an attractive man or woman.

- Victims of webcam blackmail or grooming may think s/he is in conversation with a potential romantic interest, however a criminal gang is really behind the communication. These criminal gangs are in fact broadcasting a fake video pre-recorded video, which can be done very simply with the right software.

- What makes these so convincing are, the people in the video are programmed to obey commands and can react to the other person they are communicating with. For example they can smile, wave etc.

- Teens may also not be aware that **webcam chats and video chats can be recorded easily without their knowledge** by the other person in the chat. This can be done simply by using screen capture software which is widely available.

It is important teens know how to protect themselves online and what to do if they experience something that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Here are some tips:

#Control

No regrets—anything you send to someone, post online or do over a webcam can be saved/recorded without your knowledge.

Trustworthy
A friend of a friend?—it's easy to post fake photos or stream a fake video, ask your friend if they have met them in person.

Reality Check
Be aware of your online presence—think about how your online prole makes you appear to others.

Location
Put your safety first—don't share your location or meet up with someone you have only met online. Keep your privacy settings private.

If your child is a victim, here is the advice from Gardaí:

Don't share more. Don't pay anything.
If they ask for more photos or videos, don't send any more. Many victims who have paid have continued to get more demands for money. In some cases, even when the demands have been met the offenders will still go on to post the explicit videos.

Preserve evidence. Don't delete anything.
Keep the evidence, don't delete anything, save messages, take screenshots and record any details you have.

Report the problem to An Garda Siochána
Contact your local Garda. They will take your case seriously, and deal with it in confidence, without judging you.

SLIDE 25: Resources for Parents:

There is lots of helpful advice, support and resources for parents on the Webwise Parents Hub

- **Advice videos** from experts in parenting, technology, education and psychology on key online safety topics.

- **Explainer Guides** to popular apps and platforms

- **Talking Points** to help you to begin the conversation with your child about some of the trickier topics

- **How-To Guides** with step-by-step instruction on parental controls and privacy settings

SLIDE 26: Apps Explained

Technology changes quickly and it can be hard to stay up to date with the apps, platforms and games that children and teenagers are using.

The Webwise Explainer Guides are a great way to stay up –to-date. These are jargon free guides to popular app and platforms which outline how the app works, want what parents should look out for.

This section of the Webwise Parents Hub is updated on a regular basis and is an excellent starting point for parents who have children using social media for the first time or if you are concerned about an app or platform your child may be using – you can find out more about it in this section.

SLIDE 27: Supports for parents

There are more great supports from the other organisations in the **Irish Safer Internet Centre**, alongside Webwise.

The **National Parents Council** operates a parent/adult helpline, which is a dedicated helpline to deal with issues relating to internet safety, including cyberbullying. The NPC also provides parents with training courses, both online and face to face

ISPCC operates a helpline (Childline), which provides services on a 24/7 basis where children affected by issues encountered on the internet may turn for advice and guidance. They also have Digital Ready Hub which provides advice and information on online safety.

Hotline.ie is the Irish national reporting centre where members of the public can securely, anonymously, and confidentially report concerns in respect of illegal content online, especially child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

Coimisiún na Meán are responsible for Ireland's Online Safety Framework. This framework means that there are now more rules requiring online platforms to protect children and adults rights online. Online platforms must protect people, especially children, from being harmed by their experience online.

SLIDE 28: Reflection Slide

Reflection slide

Think back over some of the issues we have spoken about today:
1. Managing Screen time
2. Dealing with conflict
3. Talking to your child about what they do online
4. Social Media

5. Image-sharing
6. Digital Footprint
7. Responding to cyberbullying
8. Teaching your child how to protect themselves online.

ACTIVITY
Create a to do list of actions that you think will help your children to have more positive online experiences.
Suggestion – go around the room and take some responses from the group

SLIDE 29: Start the Conversation

Now that we have looked at some of the biggest concerns parents have around their child's internet use. **Let's look at what we can do!**

One of the best ways to help your child navigate the online world safely is by having open communication about internet safety.

It's important to note that a one-time conversation isn't enough. As children grow and their online habits evolve, so will their needs and interests. Parents must continuously guide their children through these changes. Before having a conversation, take a moment to consider your goals—what guidelines do you want to set? Are all caregivers on the same page?

Keep in mind that this should be an ongoing dialogue. Go at your child's pace, and expect to have multiple conversations to cover different topics. Give your child space to share their thoughts, and be ready for unexpected concerns that might come up. Kids' worries about the internet might differ from adults' concerns, so it's essential to listen and allow them time to express their feelings or pressures they may be facing online.

Top Tips for Parents

1. **Discover the Internet together:** Introduce your child to the internet yourself. Explore it together, making the experience positive and fun. Discovering exciting websites can help foster a sense of adventure and make it easier to discuss both the good and bad experiences in the future.
2. **Agree on rules for Internet use at home:** Work with your child to establish household guidelines for internet use. Consider the following:
   o When and for how long is it acceptable to use the internet?
   o How should personal information (name, address, phone number, etc.) be handled?
   o How should one behave when gaming, messaging, or emailing?
   o Which websites and activities are acceptable or off-limits?
   o Set a good example by following these rules yourself—or at least explain why the rules may differ for adults.
3. **Be careful about sharing personal information:** For younger children, a simple rule is not to share their name, phone number, or photo without your approval. Older

children, especially those on social media, should be selective about the personal details and photos they share online. Once something is online, it's out of your control, even with privacy settings.

4. **Discuss the risks of meeting online "friends" in person** While the internet is a great place to meet new people, children should not meet online friends without adult supervision. Always ensure that your child has your approval before meeting someone in person. Consider having a fail-safe plan, like calling them during the meeting to check in.

5. **Teach critical thinking skills:** Children often use the internet for schoolwork or personal interests. It's crucial they understand not all information online is accurate or trustworthy. Teach them how to cross-check information by comparing different sources and guide them toward reliable websites.

6. **Be open, not overly critical of their Internet exploration:** Children may encounter inappropriate content by accident or out of curiosity. Instead of overreacting, use this as an opportunity to talk about the material and set clear rules about what's acceptable. Understand that curiosity about off-limits content is natural.

7. **Let your children show you what they do online:** To guide your child effectively, you need to understand how they use the internet. Let them show you the websites they visit and the activities they enjoy. This helps you stay informed and involved.

8. **Emphasise the positive side of the Internet:** The internet is a valuable tool for both learning and entertainment. Encourage your child to make the most of it, exploring its potential for education, creativity, and fun.

SLIDE 30: Video - Lead by example

CEO of National Parents Council; Áine Lynch on the the importance of modelling good behaviour when it comes to addressing internet safety in the home.
Click the Link to play video: https://vimeo.com/191043980
Please ensure pop-ups are enables on your computer. Video will play on vimeo.
Alternatively videos can be accessed on the Webwise.ie/parents page.

SLIDE 31: Next steps

- Stay informed by visiting the **Webwise Parents Hub**

- **Have regular, open, conversations** with your child about the opportunities and challenges they may encounter online

- **Agree guidelines to help protect your child**, and to help ensure they strike a healthy balance

- And stay up to date by following Webwise on social media

SLIDE 32: Take questions.
Thank you for joining us.