Some useful websites

CEOP: www.ceop.gov.uk
Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
Get safe online: www.getsafeonline.org
NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
Child Line   www.childline.org.uk
Childnet (Gaming)   www.childnet.com
Safer Internet   www.saferinternet.org.uk
Barnardos   www.barnardos.org.uk
Mumsnet   www.mumsnet.com
Getnetwise   www.getnetwise.org
Internet Matters   www.internetmatters.org

Children & Young People Staying Safe On-Line

The purpose of this guide

Online technology has changed the way people live their lives in many positive ways. It has also brought with it safety issues that require knowledge and awareness among those responsible for their welfare.

This booklet offers advice and guidance

- How children & young people are using technology

- Main risks children & young people face online

- Where to access further information to stay safe online

How children & young people use computers and the internet

Children & young peoples' use of computers is often different from adults. Many engage in a variety of online activities, quickly switching from one to another as their attention moves from one or several of the following activities:

- Research to help with homework, projects and course work

- Communicating with each other via Emails, instant messaging, chat rooms, discussion groups or to swap files and music etc.

- Playing online games that can be downloaded from a website or they may play with others who are online (friends or strangers)

- Listening to music; streaming videos from the internet e.g. YouTube, also downloading and uploading videos

- Buying online; EBay, Amazon etc.— there are thousands of companies, individuals and organisations with something to sell

Recognising the potential threats to children & young people on the internet is the first step to protecting them.

Managing risks

- **Parent control**; Install filtering software, a comprehensive list is available on 'GETNETWISE' (www.getnetwise.org)

- **Online relationships**; Find out who they are communicating with. You should know if they visit chat rooms and understand what they do when they visit these sites

- **Talk;** Having an open relationship is the key to being able to discuss with them the people or situations they may inadvertently or deliberately come across on the internet

- **Be honest and open**; It is vital to openly discuss with the child or young person the possibility of them seeing or being sent sexually explicit or other worrying material (e.g. pornography)

Some of the risks children and young people face online

- **Meeting and chatting online;** There is no way of knowing if someone is telling the truth, it is very easy to lie online! It's a fact that there are some people who use the internet to chat to children & young people because they want to hurt them or make them do things they don't want to

- **Loss of privacy;** Children & young people often unintentionally share personal information such as 'geo-tagged' photos or revealing their age, school and contact details. When children & young people are on social media, teach them the importance of ensuring that the privacy settings are set to "Friends Only" and even then, to keep certain information private

- **On-line Bullying;** This is a common problem. The most common techniques are that children & young people are harassed or harass others via texts, internet chat rooms and emails for example. This can tend to spill over into/from the real world. Online bullying can be 24/7 with no escape for the child or young person

- **Inappropriate material;** Many websites include material that is sexual (e.g. pornography), violent, hateful or harmful (e.g. anorexia, suicide etc.), or which advocate the use of weapons or harmful substances such as alcohol or illegal drugs. Sometimes these sites can be viewed by mistake by the child or young person, e.g. miss-typing a word into a search engine

- **Online gaming and 'in app' purchases**; Children & young people may play with others who can become abusive when gaming. They may view inappropriate and upsetting content, they may also find it hard to stop playing the games. Be aware when linking credit cards to apps, as in app purchases can be credited automatically

- **Sexting;** The word 'sexting' is when a sexual image or video is sent via a message to another person. It is important to explain to children & young people that taking, sending and receiving sexual explicit (e.g. naked or semi naked) pictures of themselves is illegal and could lead to the police being involved. If they receive or are encouraged to send them, it could also lead to harmful situations for them such as being stalked, receiving abuse or being blackmailed

Useful websites on next page