



Head Teacher: Miss P Wilson

Livesey Street
Collyhurst
MANCHESTER
M40 7PR

Telephone (0161) 834 9529

Fax (0161) 8394355

Email: admin@abbott.manchester.sch.uk

Website: www.abbott.manchester.sch.uk

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Seeing and sharing scary things online

Keeping children safe is a top priority at Abbott Community Primary School, whether on school premises or beyond, and this of course extends to the online world.

Online safety, or digital resilience, is a whole-school effort: it is embedded throughout the curriculum but also taught explicitly in subjects like PSHCE and Computing. It is also an integral part of our safeguarding focus, given the real risks and dangers which exist online. In all we do, we like to focus on the positives of the online world. We recognise that technology is here to stay and pupils at our school live, love and learn through technology.

What we would like to encourage you to do is to talk to your children about what they get up to online. Research has shown that they want to talk to you and trust your life experience and advice, so it doesn't matter if you've ever played their games or heard of their apps. Please take time to talk to them over the next few weeks about what they do on their devices and with whom, what they love, and what worries them. Why not get them to show or teach you how to use one of their apps, sites or games? The key thing is to stay positive, be real about the risks and make sure they know who they can talk to if they are unsure.

There are plenty of things to be aware of online, but if you are warning them about risks and dangers, please **don't** show them scary images or tell them the names of 'bad apps' (all apps can be good or bad) or challenges/dares to avoid. If you do, that can scare them even more or encourage them to go and google it later!

Here are a few links that may be helpful for you:

- apps.lgfl.net
- screentime.lgfl.net
- parentsafe.lgfl.net

In the past week, there have been many press stories about a particular nasty challenge circulating with a scary image on social media. These stories are based on a hoax for which there is no evidence to say that any of the claims are true! Please do not show any scary images from the newspapers and/or social media to your children in order to talk about it, and do not mention the challenge by name. Instead, as above, talk about what to do if they see something scary or someone dares them to do something stupid or dangerous; ask them if they would tell someone and who; make sure they know never to forward these things to their classmates.

We will continue to deliver work in school, around enabling children to protect themselves online. Any questions, please speak to a member of staff.

Yours sincerely,
Miss Wilson