

09/01/2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Online safety Newsletter

After the Christmas break many students may have received new technology as presents. As a result, I felt it a good time to send out some helpful information about keeping our young people safe online in this ever-modernising world.

Child Safety and the Metaverse

The Christmas holidays have now come to a close and a new year has begun. As pupils and staff return to school, the annual playground inquisition will begin. Among their peer group young people may begin to discuss what they got for Christmas. For some the answer will almost certainly be 'a Fortnite battle pass, a new PC, a PlayStation 5 etc', all of which are devices which allow both unfettered access to the internet and expose children to voice chat, text chat and photo sharing with complete strangers. This year presents an acceleration of vulnerability window as VR headsets, connected to Facebook's Metaverse, have been released onto the marketplace. The Metaverse seeks to link users to the internet as a Virtual Entity through the use of Virtual Reality Headsets. This amplifies the danger children are exposed to online. Over the coming months it will be important to understand these Christmas gifts and the issues linked to them. To help you understand this new, fast changing issue the NSPCC has published a guide to both the Metaverse and VR headsets. To find out more please follow the link:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/christmas-vr-safety-advice-for-parents-metaverse/>

A Guide to Online Safety and Gaming

As a new generation of young people start using multiplayer games and the internet in general, it is more important than ever to make your child aware of how to stay safe online. The SWGfL has published a pamphlet on how to best keep safe whilst using online software and games. With advice on reporting and blocking, online socialization and the considerations on online gaming, the pamphlet can be a useful resource for any parent. You can find a link to this resource here: <https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/online-safety-and-gaming.pdf>

Yours sincerely



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