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# SCOIL MHUIRE

## ROBINSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## Primary School Parents' Guide to Online Safety

Dear Parents,

Whether we like it or not, technology and the Internet are firmly fixed in our children's lives. Use of the Internet can be a wonderful thing, opening up new worlds and supporting children's learning and development in many ways, as well as being a fun way to relax and keep in touch with friends. However, we are all aware of the pitfalls and dangers of the online community, and since most of the current generation of parents grew up in the days before smartphones, we can feel a little clueless as to how best to protect our children.

Here are some ideas which will support your primary school child's safety and well-being online.

- Set up parental controls on your home broadband and all Internet-enabled devices your child has access to.
- Password-protect all accounts.
- Choose the sites your child has access to on their account.
- Make sure your child is using child-safe search engines, such as Swiggle or KidzSearch, and activate 'safe search' options on other search engines such as Google and Youtube (there are videos online to show you how to do this).
- Switch devices to airplane mode when your child is playing online games. This will prevent them from accidentally making in-app purchases or contacting other players online.
- Pay close attention to the age ratings on games, apps and films to make sure they are suitable for your child. If you would not allow your child to watch a 15 or 18 certificate film, you should not let them play a game with the same rating.
- Set your homepage to a child-friendly one.
- Keep all devices your child will use, in a high-traffic communal area in your home, such as the kitchen or living room. Be with your child when they are online and talk about what they are doing.
- Set rules for screen time and stick to them.
- Investigate safe social media sites for kids.
- Sometimes children find themselves bullying or being bullied online (also known as 'cyberbullying'). Talk to your child about being a good friend online, and how our words and actions still hurt even if we can't see a person's reaction to them.
- Talk regularly about the importance of online safety, and about what your child is getting up to online. You'll be grateful you did this, especially as your child gets older. Keeping those lines of communication open is a powerful way of letting your child know that you trust them but expect them to be honest.

Research shows that the age at which children are accessing smart devices and the Internet is getting younger and younger. It's never too soon to start good eSafety habits with your child.

We will be talking and discussing the advantages and the dangers of Social Media in school. Social media can be great to communicate with friends but there are also dangers associated with it. Please find the age limits of popular social media sites below in which your child may be using and interacting on.

**Age restrictions for popular social media sites:**

The digital age of consent in Ireland is **16**.

This means that social media giants such as Facebook and Snapchat, etc... have to take measures to acquire parental consent for users it knows are between 13 and 16 years of age.

- Facebook: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Snapchat: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Twitter: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Instagram: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Tumblr: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Whatsapp: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- TikTok: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Musicaly: 16 years of age / 13 with parental permission
- Youtube: 18 years of age / 13 with parental permission

There are some children in the class who are using social media and messaging apps. Please be aware that some of these apps don't require a sim card in the phone once they have internet connection/data. The language that they should be using and how they should be communicating online is extremely important. Being responsible and mature is important when using the app or online services. Please speak to your child about this.

If you are unsure as to the age restrictions on other social media sites that your child may be using please do investigate.

Please check the settings of any social media that your child may use. The default setting usually leaves the profile open to the public until the settings have been changed to private. This is especially the case when using snapchat.

If you are unsure about any of the social media sites that your child is using please talk to them about them and investigate yourself as to the nature of the sites.

There are a lot of positives to be taken from social media but there are also cons to it.

**The ultimate aim is that your child is safe online and that they use social media responsibly.**

Robinstown management and staff.