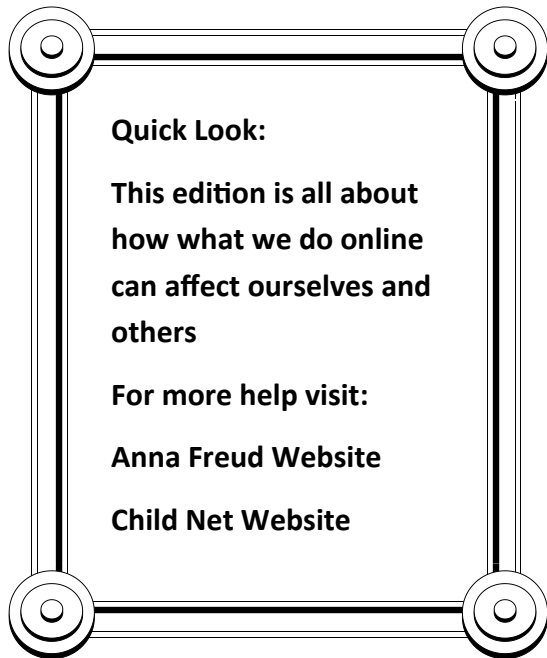


Wellbeing and Mental Health Parent Newsletter

Autumn Term 2023



Mental Health and the online World



This week we have been talking about how to keep safe online. Did you know that spending too much time online can damage your mental health? Excessive internet /device use can result in poor sleep, limited physical activity and can over time lead to depressions, relationship issues and anxiety.

Time to reflect: How much time does your child spend online? Do you think you need to change anything? Are you aware of what your child is doing on line?

Increase in internet and social media use by age

5-7 year olds	8-11 year olds	12-15 year olds
5% have a smartphone	35% have a smartphone	83% have a smartphone
67% go online for nearly 9.5 hours a week	93% go online for nearly 12.5 hours a week	99% go online for nearly 20.5 hours a week
4% have a social media account	18% have a social media account	69% have a social media account

Advice about how you live your life online. I have not edited any of this message that we have given to the children as it is all an important read for anyone online. Can your children see what you post online? Would you be happy with them seeing everything you do online?



When people are online, it can feel like no-one can see you. Anyone who uses the internet and online apps is developing their online personality. Your online personality is the person you are presenting to both people you know and people you do not know. You are in control of what other people see, and bit by bit, across all the sites you post or message on, you build up an online personality that has a reputation, just like you do in real life.

You might have an online personality almost identical to your real-life personality, but lots of people have an alter-ego; a more exaggerated, extreme or confident version of themselves. Some people even pretend to be someone else entirely. In a way that's a good thing about social media, because it can give people more confidence than they might have face-to-face.

Unfortunately, there are negative sides too. Sometimes people online do or say things that they wouldn't say in real life. Some people may say rude things about others or even post or send videos that are inappropriate that you definitely wouldn't share in real life.

BEWARE of OVERSHARING: Stuff sticks around on the internet. Even if you try to delete it, once something is posted or sent, it can't be erased completely. So if you say something nasty to someone, or post or send something you might regret, there's always a trace of it somewhere.

It's easy to say nasty things online when you are just typing into a little box. But behind the little box is a real person, just like you. Saying horrible things online is known as cyberbullying and it can really damage children's health (just like bullying face to face) Although cyberbullying can't be physically violent it can actually be worse than face-to-face bullying because there's no escaping from it.

If someone does or says anything to you online that makes you uncomfortable, or hurts your feelings, then you should take action. You could talk to them and explain how you are feeling and ask them to stop. For anything more serious, or anything that happens more than once, tell an adult that you trust. If it happens at school then let a teacher know immediately. Keep an eye on other people too, you wouldn't watch someone being beaten up without telling someone so the same applies online.

Everyone deserves to use the internet and all its great websites without being intimidated, harassed or humiliated.