An Internet Safety Guide for Parents

The internet is a fantastic tool for entertainment, shopping and education.
As its use grows it is important that we understand enough to keep children safe online.
Some adults feel intimidated when using the internet. Children may have better technical skills than adults. However, children still need adult protection in using the internet safely.

Potential Dangers:

Children and young people face potential risks from someone online who may want to harm them.

Children and young people must learn the stranger danger rule in a new context and never give out personal details or meet with anyone they have contacted via the internet.

Remember everyone they meet in a chat room is a stranger even though the child or young person may consider them a friend.

Encourage the child to see it like giving out personal details to a stranger in the street.

Filtering software can help to block inappropriate material but it is not 100% effective and is no substitute for good adult supervision.

Safety Tips:

- Teach children and young people not to give out personal information about themselves or anyone else.
- Teach children and young people to be as careful about strangers online as they are in the street.
- Be open with them, talk about how they use the internet.
- Keep the computer in a communal room, not tucked away in a bedroom.
- Let the child or young person know they can come to you if they become uncomfortable with anything that happens on the internet.
- Teach children and young people not to meet anyone face to face they have met on the internet without their parents/carers permission and presence.

Further Information and Resources:

The **Kidsmart** website contains further resources and activities including lesson plans, quizzes and a parents' presentation. **www.kidsmart.org.uk**

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (**CEOP**) Centre combines police powers with the business sectors, Government, specialist charities and other interested

organisations. The website includes useful information about how to report incidents of abuse on the internet. **www.ceop.gov.uk**

Chat Danger provides comprehensive advice to children and young people about chat related issues both on the internet and on mobile phones. **www.chatdanger.com**

Safekids is a family website which contains information for parents, children and young people. It also includes an internet contract for parents and children or young people to sign. **www.safekids.com**

Jargon Buster:

Chat Rooms:
A place on the internet, accessed through a computer or mobile device, where people communicate by typing messages.

Filter:
Computer software that allows you to block certain material from your computer. You can, for example, block websites with violent, sexual or racist content.

Instant messaging:
A way of exchanging typed messages with a friend or group of friends over the internet, similar to sending text messages from mobiles.

Newsgroups:
Newsgroups, communities and clubs are discussion groups on the internet. Unlike chat rooms, users do not communicate 'live', but post messages to each other on a particular topic. They are potentially open to abuse, for example, through people posting illegal material.

Web cams
Short for web cameras, they are special video cameras that can be linked to the internet. You point them at something and the image appears, more or less straightaway on your computer screen. Could be used to send or receive unpleasant or illegal images.

Whispering
Whispering is a way of sending a private message to an individual in a chat room. This is like having a private conversation with a stranger. As in the real world, it is safer to stay in the public area of the chat room.