Advice for parents/carers on how to keep their children safe online
This page intends to give some advice on how to manage this challenging situation as well as provide you with plenty of links to where you can get further advice.

Please find below some useful websites:
CEOPs – the place to get advice on and report an inappropriate or potentially illegal content or action that you see online.
http://ceop.police.uk

ThinkUKnow – an excellent website that has all sorts of advice for parents and carers as well as sections for children who want to learn about E-safety for themselves - an excellent resource to look at as a family.
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

UK Safer Internet Centre – this website contain a wealth of resources and content about how to keep children safe online. They are also the group behind the Safer Internet Day initiative that is celebrated on a yearly basis.
http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers
Know It All for Parents – is a unique interactive E-safety guide put together by Childnet International.
http://www.childnet.com/resources/know-it-all-for-parents

NSPCC – advice on the appropriateness of online content from the NSPCC.
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Kidsmart – a fantastic online resource with excellent E-safety tips. There is also a fantastic children's section for your children to explore.
http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/parents/
Digizen – a fantastic resource that includes all sorts of advice on how we, as adults, can encourage children to become responsible digital citizen and discerning when viewing digital content.
http://www.digizen.org

Childnet.com – advice on how to support children who are using social networking sites.
http://www.childnet.com/resources/young-people-and-social-networking-sites

Pegi – information on the games rating system and what the codes on the back of games tell you about their content.
http://www.pegi.info/en/index/id/33/

Google – information from Google on how to keep your family safe online.
http://www.google.co.uk/safetycenter/families/start/basics/

Being aware of how your child accesses the Internet is directly correlated to your ability to keep them safe on it. Make sure you are aware of their online habits and provide them with the tools to keep themselves safe. Many tablet and mobile phone devices contain parental control options and (if set up by a parent prior to give the device to the child) these may provide some further protection in the online world. However, whether this is always the solution to the problem is discussed below.

Whilst there is a lot to be said for blocking and filtering content (and we at Ridge View School have Kent's filtering system in place), there is an argument that this is not always the answer (or perhaps more correctly put, not the only answer). Unfortunately, no filtering system is 100% safe, accurate or up-to-date. Whilst filtering does protect your child from a lot of content, it does not teach them what to do if they stumble across something inappropriate online. Therefore, it is not always the best solution. Teaching your child what to do when they come across inappropriate content is arguable more important than protecting them from seeing it. Unfortunately, as we all know, it is so easy to stumble across inappropriate content online and, therefore, children need to know what to do if they find something upsetting. Having this kind of conversation, can give them the skills that they will need to protect themselves for the rest of their lives – long after them have left the 'safe' filtered world of your home.

One of the main causes of distress for children online is the fear that if they find something inappropriate or do something wrong online that their access to the Internet will be taken away. This fear leads them to not speak to an adult about the inappropriate things that they have found because of the fear of the device being removed. However, if you spend time discussing what they are doing online and the kinds of websites and games they are engaging in, your child will be much more open to discussing the things that have been going well as well as anything that has gone wrong, as they don't have such a fear of their prized possession being taken away from them.

There are a huge number of misconceptions surrounding social networks and the laws that govern them. Parents/carers will often mention that it is illegal for children to be on Facebook under the age of thirteen, yet happily allow their children to use YouTube from a much younger age. In fact, the same law governs YouTube as governs Facebook. This means that it is illegal for Facebook or Youtube to knowingly allow users under this age to use their website. It does not mean that children under this age are breaking the law by signing up to these websites, it means that the websites are breaking the law by hosting them.   However, there is absolutely nothing to stop that same child re-signing up for another account, lying about their age and keeping it hidden from you. This also means that they will not come to you to talk about any issues they have on the social network as, when you were aware of it previously, you took it away from them.   However, again, it comes back to parents/carers being open and honest with their children about the pros and cons of social networking and, most importantly of all, ensuring that children know how to keep themselves safe on social networks – if they are eventually allowed to join them. If your child is engaging with social networking (and there are some social networks which allow access for children of any age), make sure you and they know how the social network works.
·	Teach them how to lock their privacy settings down so that only their friends can see what they post.
·	Talk to them about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate to post online, both in terms of text and photos.
·	Make sure they know how to report something, if they see anything inappropriate (virtually all social networks will have somewhere you can report inappropriate content to – it is just not always easy to find! Check the menus and links at the top and bottom of the websites).

·   Talk to them about ensuring that their only friends on social networks are friends they have in the real world as, unfortunately, not everyone is who they say they are online.

Social networking can be a challenging but rewarding place for both children and adults but make sure that children know exactly how to keep themselves safe when using them.
Make sure your child knows what to do if they do come across inappropriate content or something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Lots of parents/carers talk to their children about their fire escape plan or provide a place to meet when in a crowded area. This is done so that the children know what to do if the worst happens. However, do you always take the time to do this in the online world? Some adults find the Internet a scary place, so imagine what it is like for a child. Take the time to talk to your child about what to do if someone asks them to do something they are not comfortable with, they stumble across inappropriate content or a link comes up that they are unsure whether to click.   We would then talk about the content itself. This way the children learn about the kinds of key word searches that may return inappropriate content as well as the reason why some of that content is online. This could be an excellent 'Internet Survival Plan' for your house too. The important thing about adopting a plan such as this is to ensure that the child is praised for bringing the inappropriate content to you and not scalded for typing in the wrong thing. If the child is scalded and the device removed from them, they may not talk to you if they find inappropriate content or something makes them feel uncomfortable again and next time it could be something even more serious.
CEOPs logo:
 "This is a place where you can report any inappropriate or potentially illegal activity with or towards a child online. This might be a conversation with someone online who you think may be an adult, and is treating a child in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable, or you think may be trying to meet them for sex."
Who they are,
"The Government has set up the CEOP Centre to take these reports and make sure that young people are safe online. This Centre is staffed by specialist police officers and investigators. Your report will go to straight to them, however if the report is deemed to require immediate action outside of the Centre's operating hours the information will automatically be passed to one of our Virtual Global Taskforce members, all of whom are law enforcement, who will look at it and decide if it requires immediate action and send an alert back to the UK if required."

Teaching children that it is important to report inappropriate or illegal activity is just as important as trying to protect them from it. This helps children to understand that it important to protect other people from the dangers they can face on the Internet too.

Online gaming (including on games consoles, such as Xbox, Playstation and Wii) is another area that can be fraught with difficult choices for parents/carers. Many parents/carers buy games for their children and allow them to use their online account to play games with people all over the world. However, are they always aware of the world they are allowing them access to?
Playing games online can be a fun and rewarding experience for children. However, they are often able to talk to complete strangers from around the world and have written or oral conversations with them. This can be incredibly exciting for a child. However, are they aware that these strangers aren't their friends in real life and could lie about their age or identity? It is important to ensure that children are prepared for the kind of things that can happen during these games and that they feel comfortable enough to talk to you about when they see or hear something that makes them feel uncomfortable.   Remember, if they feel that you will take away their access to a game or console if they tell you when something goes wrong, they are less likely to tell you again in the future. Make sure that they have the strategies in place to deal with any issues that may arise in the games.
It is really important that parents/carers become aware of the PEGI rating for games that can be seen on the back of the disk's packet. These ratings give you a good idea of both the age limit for the game as well as an idea of the content of the game. By using this information, parents/carers can they make an informed decision about the appropriateness of the game for their child. Another tip is to ensure that you either play the game with your child or spend some

time watching them play the game. This allows you to see more clearly how a child is interacting with the game and whether you are happy with the kind of images it is allowing them access to. This is not to say that online gaming is a world that you should not allow your children to access. However, it is important to be fully aware of what your child is playing/doing online and ensure that they have the skills and resilience to deal with any challenging situations they may face whilst doing so.

Children sharing graphic images of themselves with a boyfriend, girlfriend or close friend is becoming much more prevalent and at a much younger age. It is really important as adults, therefore, that we teach children the danger of sending such images to other people and how situations like these can quickly spiral out of control. Unfortunately, what would have once stayed behind the bike shed can quickly escalate into something that is clearly in the public domain.

We hope that you have found this guide useful. If you would like to know more about this important topic and get further advice, below is a list of websites that can provide this for you.