Shetland Child Protection Committee

Safer Internet Day 2019 | Tuesday 5 February
Together for a better internet
www.saferinternetday.org.uk

Safer Internet Day is a fantastic opportunity to reflect as a family about how you can use the internet and technology safely, responsibly and positively. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, foster carer, aunt, uncle, older sibling or staff member working with children and young people – we can all play a role in empowering children to enjoy their time online!

It is a day to prompt adults to think about their own screen time and the role model they give to children and young people. Find an opportunity to discuss the whole issue of screen time with family members.

Parents need to be able to manage and control screen time—asking the following questions can help:

Q1   *Is screen time in your household controlled?*
Q2   *Does screen use interfere with what your family want to do?*
Q3   *Does screen use interfere with sleep?*
Q4   *Are you able to control snacking during screen time?*

High levels of screen time can impact on children and young people in the following ways (*taken from Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Report: Health Impacts of Screen Time)*:

♦   Children with higher screen time tend to have less healthy diet, a higher energy intake and more pronounced indicators of obesity.
♦   Children with higher screen time particularly over 2 hours per day, tend to have more depressive symptoms (although it has been found by some studies that some screen time is better for mental health than none at all).
♦   Screen use exposes children and young people to harmful content, through cyberbullying, watching violence or pornography, unrealistic imagery (body image) or through monitoring online status (e.g. likes) with their peers.
♦   Screen time displaces positive activities. Analysis of what leads to positive wellbeing has consistently supported socialising good sleep, diet and exercise as positive influences. All of these can be displaced by screen based activities.

Children and young people's views on screen time use...

88% said screen time had a negative impact on their sleep

1.5 hours was the average time spent on screens before falling asleep

41% said screen time had affected their play / fun

35% said screen time had a negative impact on their mood / mental health

18% said screen time had a negative impact on their family time and schoolwork

109 children and young people aged 11-24 years took part in this engagement exercise.

RCPCH &Us
The voice of children, young people and families

Other concerns about screen time have been identified in the Technology and the Future of Childhood report:

♦ The earlier young children experience screen technology the more likely they are to want more. The fast reward nature of the online experience is resulting in a growing tendency to choose technology over more traditional childhood pursuits such as playing with others and outdoor games.
♦ From an increasingly young age children are being exposed to online judgment and cyber-bullying.
♦ An estimated one third of internet users worldwide are under 18. Time online has increased in all age groups and continues to grow. The particular focus of this report is the early years ie pre-birth to eight years, as for the creation of healthy, happy and sustainable societies this is the single most important period of the human lifespan.

So having taken all this into account what is the best advice?

♦ Families should negotiate screen time with their children.
♦ Screen time replaces activities that research has shown are good for children—playing, interacting with family and friends, being physically active.

IF FAMILIES WANT TO REDUCE SCREEN TIME THEY CAN:

♦ *Have a Plan*
♦ *Be Aware, But Not Intrusive Or Judgemental*
♦ *Think About Your Own Media Use*
♦ *Prioritise Face to Face Interaction*
♦ *Be Snack Aware*
♦ *Protect Sleep*

Before you...

THINK!

T = Is it True?
H = Is it Helpful?
I = Is it Inspiring?
N = Is it Necessary?
K = Is it Kind?

Tam Baillie, Chair of Shetland Child Protection Committee strikes cautious note and says that parents do need to be in control:

"Social media is a great place, full of exciting and enticing people to meet. However, like all places there are rules to follow to keep yourself safe. I would expect parents to be curious about where their children go, who they associate with and how long they spend there - same as in the physical world. Screen time is increasing for all ages and we need to ensure that it does not interrupt real-life social interaction and activities among adults and children necessary for balanced child development."

Please see link to full RCPCH report here:
https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/rcpch_screen_time_guide_-_final.pdf

Link to Screen Time Parent Factsheet here:
https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/rcpch_screen_time_parent_fact_sheet_-_final.pdf

Link to Technology and the future of childhood report:
https://www.savechildhood.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/DIGITAL-CHILDHOOD-Save-Childhood-Movement-1.pdf

Link to Safer Internet Day where you can find education packs and activity sheets:
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/

Find useful information and Internet Safety Leaflets for Children and Young People and for Parents and Carers on our SaferShetland Website: https://www.safershetland.com/child-protection

Link to Voluntary Action Shetland Website: https://www.shetland-communities.org.uk/subsites/vas

If there are any specific topics or issues you would like us to cover in this newsletter, please contact Kate Gabb, Lead Officer on **kate.gabb@shetland.gov.uk**