

Information, Feedback and Resources Information Sheet from Dr. Maureen Griffin

As promised I am following up with feedback and resources.

I have outlined the key issues for students, consistent with schools across Ireland, and have included resources for both school and parents.

1. **Parental Involvement.** Approx. 50%-70% of students indicated they can download an App/game without needing a password or code from parents. As the digital age of consent is 16, parental involvement is central in ensuring the App/game is age appropriate, the privacy settings are activated and advice is offered to children regarding challenges a particular App/game may present. I have attached guides for parents explaining how to activate both Family Link and Family Sharing.

2. **Technology in bedrooms and the impact on sleep.** Children need 9-11 hours of sleep every night. The majority of students (60%-70% approx.) indicated they have devices in their bedrooms at night, with some students using devices past midnight. While there may have been a certain amount of bravado here, further discussions on the importance of sleep would benefit all. I encouraged all students to keep devices out of their bedroom at night time and restrict interactive media use for at least an hour before bedtime.

3. **Unknown Friends.** This was particularly evident for students in games, with approx. 50% of students indicating they have muted chats as they don't know the person they are talking to. I encouraged all students to go through their friends lists and remove people they do not know and trust in real life. I also encouraged students to stick to a 'friends list' when gaming, to play the games offline and turn their account private. Further discussions around who is really a friend online would benefit all students going forward.

4. The majority of students indicated they have seen **adult content online**, (e.g. gambling Ads in free games). Reminding parents to activate parental controls and use safe searching options would benefit all.

5. **Lying about their age.** A number of students in each session indicated they have lied about their age online to play a game, download an App, or use a particular site, with the majority pretending to be over 16 years. We spoke about the increased risks lying about your age can introduce (e.g. age inappropriate ads, friend suggestions for older people, use of their personal data, less protection/safety from platform).

6. **Sharing passwords.** While the majority of students indicated they do not share passwords with friends, the majority of students also indicated they know someone else's password, particularly parents. I encouraged all students to keep their password private, treat it like your toothbrush and change regularly.

7. **Age in-appropriate Apps.**

Apps mentioned by students included Snapchat, TikTok and Youtube. These Apps are designed for those aged 13+. Students also indicated they are playing 16+/18+ games.

I have attached some resources based on the issues I feel are most relevant.

1. Conversation starters for parents to keep the conversation going at home
(See point No.1)
2. Webwise also offers great resources for schools HTMLheroes <https://www.webwise.ie/html-heroes/> My Selfie and the Wider World <https://www.webwise.ie/myselfie-wider-world/> and All Aboard for DigiTown. "All aboard for DigiTown" attached(See point No. 2)
3. For students, I have attached a "Stay Safe Checklist". (See point No. 3)
4. For parents, I have attached a very good Digital Parenting Guide, recommended books and 2 parents booklets, a gadget gift guide if a device came into the home at christmas and a pdf copy of the main slides covered in the parent session.(See point No.4)
5. The Sleep Programme, which may come in useful in SPHE classes, or maybe setting a challenge for students to give up screens after a set time and see how long they can last and the impact it has on sleep quality and general well being. Little challenges like this every now and again can make students more aware of the impact technology is having on their sleep.
6. Parental Guides on various apps/ online issues available from the National Online Safety UK <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/platform-guides/> They cover a range of popular apps and issues such as social media addiction, grooming, sexting etc. The guides offer practical advice and are a great resource for parents. You could release one guide to parents every week/fortnight to keep the conversation going. I have attached some here, but many more to download from the above link.
7. Another great website is Common Sense Media <https://www.common sense media.org/> It offers reviews, age recommendations and advice on a range of popular social networking sites/chatting apps etc. They provide good articles on a weekly basis, which again can keep the conversation going with parents.
8. CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> offer great resources for students / staff & parents.
9. Guides for parents to activate Family Sharing and Family Link so they can control and monitor what their child is doing on their device.
10. The Fraud Smart website <https://www.fraudsmart.ie/> may come in useful for students, staff and parents, regarding current scams online and how we can protect ourselves.

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