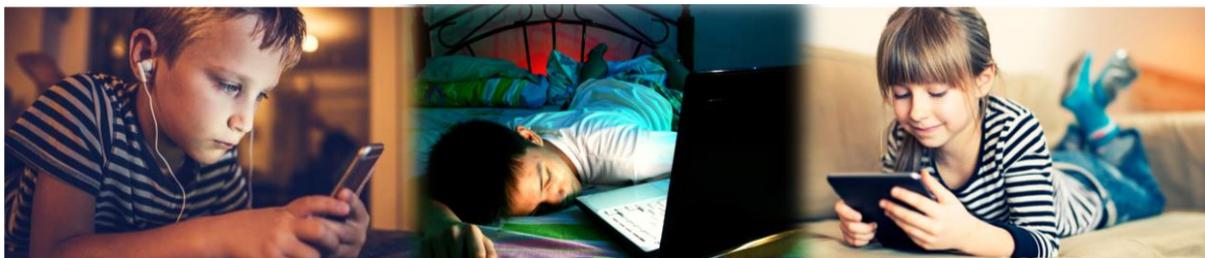


CYBER SAFETY



With the increase in children's online time over lockdown, and with the holidays coming up, I want to highlight the importance of parent presence and monitoring of child internet use. Every year our classes complete the Netsafe 'Hector's World' cyber-safety training, so that everyone is up to date with safe internet use. Please remind your children of the importance of being a safe and responsible internet citizen.

In the past our school has worked with cyber safety expert, John Parsons. John has shared many excellent insights and ideas to support families in this area. One of his biggest concerns is the number of families that allow their children to sign up to social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik tok etc that have age restrictions of 13 years+. This means children must lie about their age to sign up. The age restrictions are there for a reason, and as a school we have seen how quickly things can turn ugly for students when they are on these social media platforms before they are old enough to understand the safe use of them. We strongly advise all families to check the age restrictions of any websites that your children may be using. The same goes for age-restriction games like Grand Theft Auto, which is R18 classified. It is therefore actually a crime to allow a child to watch or access games like that. Please note that Fortnite has an age rating of 12 years and upwards.

Please also assist your child in the appropriate use of other forms of online communication that are available for their age, so that both your child and other children are kept safe and feel valued.

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

On the positive side of things, there are many good ways to support your child with the online world. These include:

1. Discuss and get permission from them before you ever post photos about them, as it teaches them the importance of thought and permission in this process.
2. When your children get to the age that they are able to have their own account, decide on family values and rules that you all agree with, and write these down. A great rule to start with is that if you wouldn't say it with a parent or grandparent present, don't say it online! This reminds them that the online world is simply an extension of their real everyday lives.
3. Wherever possible, make sure you are on the same media as your child, and are connected to them. This helps them to moderate their behaviour. You can't afford to let them be in that world without you.

Hinuera School is here to support any families needing help to work through internet use issues. You can also find great support on sites like Netsafe NZ <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/social-media-parents/>

Many thanks,

Dean McDonnell - Principal