Gooseberry Alert 21
Smart Toys and Technology – Time for a re-boot?

Welcome to your **'Gooseberry Alert',** now every other week. Please feel free to **share the 'Gooseberry Planet Tips/Thoughts of the Week'**. Helping to keep you and your whole school community **Safer Online.**

Gooseberry Student 'Activity' of the week

The Big Question: How smart are you when it comes to choosing technology?

Imagine if you were your parent/carer and were asked to buy a smart toy.

To help make your decision, it might be helpful to think about the following…
- What is a 'smart toy'?
- What are the possible risks of smart toys and devices?
- How might you feel? Would you have any worries or concerns?
- What might you be thinking before you went ahead and bought it?
- What might you need to know to help you make your decision?
- What safety and security features might you look out for?
- How could you help make sure the smart toy or device was safe to use?

Please share with students**.**

Gooseberry Teacher 'Reflection' of the week

Technology is part of our everyday lives but **how can/should technology be managed safely and effectively in a classroom?** Perhaps the bigger question is **Should technology be brought into our classrooms at all?**

Discussing and taking time to reflect upon these issues could **help bring clarity for your whole school community and help to keep everyone safer online**.

Here are some other suggestions that might prove helpful when starting discussion around the use of technology within your school.

- School policies can be powerful and should be effective tools used to ensure consistency and clarity, but **how often does policy reflect and respond to the needs of technological development? Are expectations clear for the children, parents and staff? How effectively and frequently are policies reviewed, updated and applied, considering change? Are the policies for technology use, meaningful and helpful?**

- Using technology as a tool can help support teaching, encourage communication and creative ways of working and promote learning and engagement, but **is it clear what and how technology can/should be used by different stakeholders? Is there agreement about acceptable use of technology?**

- Wearable technology and personal devices are now common place, but **what technology do people have, bring and use in school? Are expectations reviewed, managed and consistently applied?**

- Banning technology can be an effective way to manage and control it in the short term, but **is the banning of technology being brought into school and used, enough, moving forward?**

Using ANY technology requires us to be smarter when creating strategies to plan, organise, manage and use it.

Please share with staff.

Gooseberry Parent 'Top 10 Tech Tips' for the festive season

The pressure of having to own the latest technology can be overwhelming for most of us, but knowing the safest devices and toys to buy for ourselves and our children (and being able to afford it), can be the biggest challenges of all. Keeping safe online can begin even before a purchase has been made!

Before making the decision to buy **any type of technology**, smart toy or device you might find it helpful to consider the following.

- **Do your research! Read reviews** of the product you are looking to buy. Importantly, **find out about the safety and security features**. **Understand what it does, how it works and how your child will use it.**

- **How is data used and protected?** Reading the terms and conditions of what data is collected and how it is protected or shared when using smart toys and devices, might help you to decide whether to buy or not.

- **Take notice of 'age recommendations' and follow them.** You know your child the best and have the responsibility when it comes to making safe decisions about the kinds of technology they use and own. **Following 'age recommendations' can help to ensure that your child is playing with toys and technology that is suitable for their age group**.

- **If in doubt…think before splashing out!** If you have any concerns at all about the safety, privacy or security of the toy or device the toughest but safest decision might be not buying it at all.

- **Be patient! Waiting a while to see how new technology performs**, in the first few weeks of its release, can help to see if there are any problems with the software. You probably would not buy a toy or device that could cause injury, so avoid buying toys and devices that are proven to be insecure online. Waiting before buying or giving it as a gift, should also give manufacturers time to fix any bugs, glitches or safety concerns with the product.

- **Secure your router!** Ensure that your home router (the box that makes it possible to connect to the internet) is **password protected**. **Use the manufacturers website to secure the router and set up parental controls**. It is easier than you might think. Some routers will allow you to customise settings for different users and devices.

- **Open the box and set it up!** Before giving the toy or device to your child **reduce the stress** of having to take it away again **and just like putting in the batteries, take time to 'set it up' beforehand**.

- **Encryption!** Unsecure web connections are not the only thing that can put our online safety at risk. Some toys and devices have been found to have unencrypted Wi-Fi connections or unsecured Bluetooth, which can make it easier for people to access the devices. **If there is no option to secure these in the device's settings, consider whether using the device is worth the risk**. If there is an option to **protect them with either a password or a PIN** ensure you choose a strong one.

  - **Security and safety**. Some toys and devices are fitted with web cameras/microphones and location GPS. The ability to take, share and store information is both their biggest selling point and, if not set up correctly, potentially their biggest weakness. **Take time to read the instructions beforehand, to help manage and secure these functions**.

  - **Health and wellbeing.** Toys and devices are a great source of entertainment and can be a welcome distraction in a difficult situation but remember, they can never really take the place of spending quality time with friends and family. Think about the best time for playing with toys and devices to help everyone enjoy the best of both worlds.

Please share with Parents.

In the news… In the news… In the news… In the news… In the news…

The festive season is in full swing but it can be difficult to know what, where and how to buy gifts online safely. The BBC have recently reported that the top presents being 'faked' are clothes and mobiles. (Read the full article here: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42085557)

There have also been increased reports in the media of fake websites, products and online accounts. Here are some top tips from BBC News supporting Safer Shopping Online.

Simple tips to avoid fraud

- If something seems cheaper than expected, it could be poor quality, fake or just non-existent

- Use methods like PayPal when buying on auction site

- Never transfer money to an unknown source or person

- If you're buying tickets for events, always buy from official sources and never pay by direct transfer

- Research online holiday deals to ensure that you are buying a genuine offer and check that it is registered with ABTA and ATOL

Source: BBC News 23 November 2017

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