**MHST**

## Mental Health in Schools Team
# Tips For Wellness

# Online Safety

With lots of our young people accessing different online platforms, it is important we are making sure this online activity is accessed in a safe and positive way. Online activity is a big part of day-to-day life and for young people is the norm. This may involve watching YouTube videos, online gaming, having social media accounts (e.g. Instagram, TikTok) or using the internet to support completing homework tasks. As a parent/ caregiver, this can at times be difficult to navigate and stay on top of these ever-evolving platforms.

It is good to remember that online activity can be positive: there are lots of opportunities to learn new things, spread joy and positivity, connect with others and show creativity.

## Our Top Tips For Online Safety:

1. **Have regular conversations about online safety-** Making communication about online activity a normal part of the conversation will create an open and more relaxed dialogue around what your young person is accessing online. This can also make it easier for your young person to come and speak to you if they do have any worries.

2. **Encourage time away from devices-** Spending too much time online and looking at a device can begin to blur the lines between the online world and what is happening right in front of us. Encourage regular screen time breaks. This could be by completing an activity which the whole family can get involved in e.g. playing a board game or going for a walk. There are also wellbeing setting on apps, including Instagram and Tik Tok to support setting these boundaries.

3. **Keeping it real-** It can be useful to remind our young people that not everything they see online is real. Some of this content may have a negative impact on how they feel about themselves and what they are doing. It can be useful to remind young people that an online post is only one snapshot of time. Encourage your young person to take control of what they are looking at and help them to feel empowered to choose to access online content that encourages positivity and makes them feel good.

Online safety is an ongoing conversation. By setting boundaries, providing guidance and being open, this encourages young people to navigate the online world safely and responsibly.

NSPCC- Talking to your child about online safety

Barnardo's- Keeping children safe online

**In Coventry and Warwickshire, for any urgent mental health concerns, contact the RISE Crisis Helpline available 24/7, by calling NHS 111. Alternatively, call 999 or visit A&E in an emergency, for example if medical attention is required.**

**MHST are available to support you and your school throughout the school year including term time and school holidays.**

**Please contact your school's Mental Health Lead for information and advice.**