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Dear Parent/Carer

KEEPING SAFE ONLINE

This week we marked Safer Internet Day on Tuesday. Keeping children safe is a top priority for us at Heston, whether on School premises or beyond. This, of course, extends to the online world, although the two worlds are closely interconnected.

Online safety or digital resilience is a whole-school effort: it is embedded throughout the curriculum, explicitly in subjects like PSHE and ICT, but also covered in other subjects and topics throughout the year. It is very much part of our safeguarding focus, given the real risks and dangers which exist online.

In all we do, however, we like to focus on the positives of the online world. We recognise that technology is here to stay and students at Heston live, love and learn through this technology.

If you want to find out more about the realities of life online for young people, including information about the risks, you may wish to read the results of a survey of 40,000 UK schoolchildren at hopesandstreams.lgfl.net.

What we would encourage you to do, is to talk to your children about their online activities. The survey made it clear that they want to talk to you and trust your life experience and advice, so it doesn't matter if you've never played their games, heard of their apps or got a virtual reality headset!

Please take time to talk to them over the next few weeks about what they do on their devices and with whom; what they love and what worries them. Perhaps get them to show or teach you how to use one of their apps, sites or games. The key thing is to stay positive, be real about the risks and make sure they know who they can talk to if they are unsure or worried about something they encountered online.

There are plenty of things to be aware of online, but if you are warning them about risks and dangers, please don't show them scary images or tell them the names of 'bad apps' [all apps can be good or bad] or challenges/dares to avoid. This will either scare them even more, or encourage them to go and search for it later!

Here are a few links that may be helpful to you:

- apps.lgfl.net
- screentime.lgfl.net
- parentsafe.lgfl.net

Yours faithfully

Margot Currie
Assistant Headteacher

Specialist Visual Arts Academy