

# Online Safety Newsletter

April 2017

**Great idea:** A school in Leicestershire recently ran a parent session alongside a school disco. While the parents had an online safety session, their children were at the disco.



## Safer Internet Day 2017

Safer Internet Day was a huge success this year with the Police launching Kayleigh's Love Story and myself and the Police in Kingsthorpe Community College launching our poster competition which seemed to go down really well! We had lots of posters in and prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> will be handed out to schools very soon. All schools that took part will get a certificate. A special mention must go to Mawsley Primary School who came up with their own online safety song. Hopefully the competition raised the profile of online safety in Northamptonshire.

## The impact of pornography

I am now talking about the impact of pornography in my secondary sessions as I am hugely concerned that it is giving young people a very warped view of reality. Feeding into this is obviously sexting and sexualised behaviour. A few things to consider:

- The average age young people have seen online porn for the first time is 11
- The average age of a porn actor in mainstream porn is 36
- 1 in 3 visits to porn sites are women

## Mental health, body image and social media

Those that have heard me speak recently know how passionate I am about mental health especially anxiety. I have been doing sessions around social media and self-esteem and found it fascinating. **We must advise young people to question everything on social media. It simply is not real.** People in general only put online the best parts of their lives. Young people and adults online portray a perfect image, from the way they look, to amazing holidays and copious amounts of selfies. The average teenage girl in this country spends 1 hour 24 minutes a week perfecting the perfect selfie. Also 6 in 10 women believe social media pressures people to look a certain way.

## Panic Culture



I am hugely concerned we are firing letters or emails off panicking parents around apps and social media. This is having a negative affect! Parents are reading the letters or emails and deleting certain apps, young people are then re-downloading them often in secret and potentially are more at risk as a result. I feel our role around online safety is to teach young people to behave safely online. In an ideal world we don't want young people using social media under age, but sadly we don't live in an ideal world folks. So we must educate parents and young people especially around how to use the internet safely. Also every app, game and website out there has the potential to be **dangerous** and we cannot eliminate all risk. But we can build up a child's digital resilience. What we must tell parents:

- Set up smart-phone free zones: it's impossible to monitor everything, so make upstairs technology free.
- Be a strong digital role model: parents practice what you preach!
- Digital sunset: no technology or devices for at least an hour before bed and set firm time limits on all devices including parents! Phones are left downstairs and buy an alarm clock, don't go to bed with a phone or tablet.

