



NEWS

Hertsmere Borough Council
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For immediate release

Raising awareness of internet safety

With young people spending more time online than ever before, it's crucial they understand how to stay safe.

Young people in Year Six at Pope Paul Catholic Primary School in Potters Bar, attended an e-safety workshop run by Herts Schools Partnership, funded by Hertsmere Borough Council together with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The workshop for 10 and 11-year-olds explored how young people use the internet and gave an overview of the online risks, including cyber-bullying and grooming.

During the session they received advice about how to spot the warning signs of grooming and what to do if they experience e-bullying. This included how to identify and avoid risk, and how to report concerns if they do encounter difficulties.

Cllr Caroline Clapper, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Health, said: "It's vital that young people are informed about the potential risks when using the internet. Unfortunately cyber-bullying and grooming is an issue, so it is essential that we equip young people with the information and skills to protect themselves online.

"The interactive workshop gave the young people lots of opportunities to ask questions and share their experiences. It has been specially designed to be appropriate and understandable for young people."

Liz Heymoz, Headteacher of Pope Paul Catholic Primary School, said: "The internet is an amazing place to learn and create, but there are risks. I believe that schools have an important role in teaching children to protect themselves in all kinds of situations, including online.

"I was delighted with the workshop - it was completely age appropriate, whilst still being engaging and informative of the potential risks but most importantly, gave it essential information on how to stay e-safe."

Jacqui Mattholie, Assistant Partnership Development Officer, Hertsmere Schools Partnership, who ran the session, said: "The internet and social media plays an important and positive role particularly in youth culture where students connect,

share ideas and discover new things; adversely we have also seen an increase in students who participate in behaviour putting themselves and friends at risk using social apps without social maturity.

"Our risk aware sessions have been developed age appropriately to set the boundary and explore how to get the most from the internet safely providing practical tips and what to do when it goes wrong helping students to prepare for secondary transition where more coming of age mistakes will be made.

"We explore the types of information we share and our need for friends and followers, the importance of critical thinking and privacy settings, behaviour and conduct, our digital footprint and reputation, grooming, bullying and the psychological effects and clearly define the law."

There is a lot of great online support available. Think U Know provides resources, training and support to prevent the online abuse and exploitation of children and young people, brought together by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). You can also visit Safer Internet UK, Childline or the NSPCC websites for great online resources and support for parents.

Watch our short YouTube video about the e-safety schools sessions: <https://youtu.be/C2b-Rp96XB8>. In the film you will hear from Jacqui Mattholie from the Hertsmere Schools Partnership, Ms Davey a teacher at Pope Paul Catholic Primary School and pupils Luca and Rosie.

For help or support about e-safety or if you work within a school and would like to book an internet safety talk, please visit our website: www.hertsmere.gov.uk/esafety

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