# Online Safety Newsletter: November 2023

## Self-Image and Identity

This month, our online safety focus is Self-Image and Identity.

Once again, the ProjectEVOLVE toolkit has been used to survey pupils and identify specific areas of development within each year group. These are identified below and will be further developed during class, assemblies and Class Tutor periods.

## Year 8

How can people curate and experiment with their online identity and why might they wish to do this?

Your online identity is determined by *what* information you share online and *where* you share it. Before you post, always consider the benefits of doing do publicly, privately or anonymously.

- ❑ If you want to get better at e.g. rock climbing, join an online forum for rock climbers and get tips from others or get questions answered

- ❑ If you are learning the guitar but have a secret ambition to become an online influencer, create some videos and share them privately with trusted family or friends to get their feedback, before looking at posting publicly later on

- ❑ If you win a prize for giving a passionate presentation about climate change, but want to do more, post a picture of the prize and talk about it online for future employers or colleges. You could also set up a blog or a forum, submit articles to climate change sites or do some online fundraising.

- ❑ If family or friends have posted embarrassing childhood photos of you online, ask them to remove the photos and ask permission before posting in future

## Year 9

**What does 'autonomy' mean when it comes to the things you share and choose to engage with online?**

**People might not present themselves in the same way across their different online accounts. They may take on different identities and doing so carries both benefits and risks.**

**To minimise the risks:**
- ❑ **Set personal accounts to private**
- ❑ **Be aware of what is shown within your profile picture, e.g. personal information**
- ❑ **Turn off location settings**
- ❑ **Be aware of who is following you and what they can see**
- ❑ **Explore privacy settings which can be used to limit what your followers can see, e.g. creating lists of friends and only sharing content to specific ones based on the context**
- ❑ **Report and block anyone who is abusive towards you or others online**
- ❑ **Turn off comments features on posts or videos if you're worried about what people might say**
- ❑ **Talk to a trusted adult if you're worried about the way you or someone else is being treated online**

## Year 10

What are some of the pressures that people can feel when they are using social media?

The phrase 'a picture tells a thousand words' helps to explain the importance young people place on images that are shared online.

Image manipulation has never been easier and more often than not, images presented online have often been edited, cropped and filtered in an attempt to influence perceptions of the

person in the photo.

Young people often feel the need to be a certain way online and some of the pressures they feel when using social media include:

❑ Peer pressure
❑ A desire for peer approval
❑ Comparing themselves or their lives to others
❑ FOMO (Fear of missing out)

*"Don't change yourself so that other people will like you. Be yourself so that the right people will love you."*

## Year 11

**How can online content limit our autonomy by influencing peoples' thinking, feelings, beliefs, behaviours and responses?**

A person's online activity, history or profile will affect the type of information returned to them in a search or on a social media feed.

The things you see don't just appear randomly, They are selected for you based on what you've searched for, accounts you follow and photos and videos you have liked.

When you search for people or topics, cookies and algorithms can affect what you find. The internet serves up the answers it thinks you want, not necessarily what's always most accurate.

If you *only encounter information or opinions that reflect and reinforce* your own it can be very difficult to change your beliefs, actions and choices. It is easier to think differently when presented with new information or experiences.

Online images can also have a huge influence on what we think feel and believe about someone. They can reinforce stereotypes and highlight unconscious bias. This can be particularly true when pictures of celebrities are used.

## Year 12

**How do I support others in need online and offline, both publicly and privately?**

**Challenge with kindness:** Outweigh the negative comments and posts by showing your support in celebration of others in what you share online. If you see a negative or offensive comment online then report it.

**Be up front:** Sometimes you might need to be up front and stand up for yourself or someone else in a message or comment thread. Whilst this can sometimes be necessary, it's also important to not be offensive towards others in the process.

**Flip it:** Change the wording to make them positive and repost them as an example of how to speak about others.

**Say Sorry and acknowledge others feelings:** If you find that you have offended someone with the things you have shared or commented online then it's important to say sorry.

**Support Privately:** If someone has received negative comments online then you might want to show your support privately by sending a DM or personal message.

**Take it offline:** Not every conversation or response needs to take place online. If it's someone you know offline then speaking to them in person might be best.