



Online Safety Newsletter: February 2024

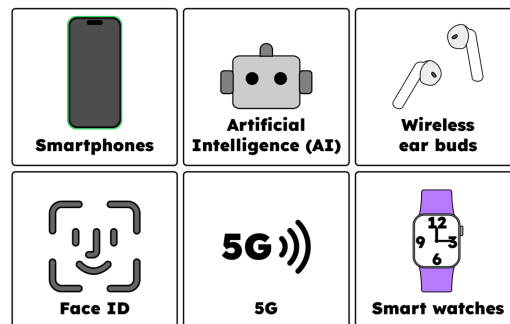
Safer Internet Day is celebrated globally in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people and to inspire a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically, and creatively.

Safer Internet Day
2024 | Tuesday
6 February

The theme for Safer Internet Day this year all about **change online**.

- Young people's perspective on new and emerging technology
- Using the internet to make change for the better
- The changes young people want to see online
- The things that can influence and change the way young people think, feel and act online and offline

Technology is changing all the time, often at a rapid rate. Think about how technology has changed in your lifetime alone. What new developments have happened in the last 10 years?



Of course, we can also think about this theme in another way: how is the internet changing us?

What we see online, who we see it with, how long we see it for, how we see it... all of the content we come across and interact with has the potential to influence the way we think, feel and act.

So, let's start by thinking about **how the internet can change our lives for the better**.

- Creating communities or connecting with others
- Hearing about important issues
- Insights into lived experiences different to your own
- Content that builds your confidence
- Being inspired to try something new

There are some great things on that list, but we know that technology and the internet can also have a **negative influence** on us too...

Here at **St. Patrick's Academy** we want to make sure you are safe, in all parts of your life including online. If something you've seen online or something that happened online is worrying you or affecting you, please come to us for help and advice. We'll listen carefully and work with you to decide what the best thing to do next might be.



In turn, this can lead to feeling negative emotions, so it's important be able to identify these negative influences and manage them in a way that will help each of us to thrive online.



Top Tips for 11-14s	Top Tips for 14-18s	Top Tips for Parents & Carers
<p>Inspire change by encouraging positivity With little acts of kindness, we can all work together to help make the internet a more positive place. When you are posting or commenting, think about the impact it will have on others. Can you challenge yourself to make someone happier today? You could leave a kind comment, share a funny post or like a friend's video.</p>	<p>Inspire change by raising awareness The internet is an amazing place to learn new things, educate yourself and inspire others to make a difference. You can use the internet</p>	<p>Inspire change by modelling how to be safe online Just like in their offline lives, children need role models online too. Set clear and fair expectations about how the whole family should use the internet and technology, and demonstrate these yourself. A Family Agreement is a great way to start conversations and put your ideas down on paper, to refer back to later and adapt as your child and your family's internet use changes.</p>
<p>Make a difference by being an upstander When something isn't right or something unkind happens, upstanders take action. You can be an upstander by standing up for others, offering them support or reporting hateful content. The more we stand up for what is right, the bigger the difference we can make.</p>	<p>Make a difference by sharing your knowledge Your ideas and your voice matters. Use your experiences and online research to help those around you. Even something simple like recommending apps and websites you like to use or the people you follow online can help inspire others. The online world can be challenging, so share your tips and advice, like how to report or look after your digital wellbeing with those around you.</p>	<p>Make a difference by having regular discussions about the online world Having regular and open conversations with your child about their use of technology and the internet is the best way to stay up to date, not only with changes in the online world, but also with what they are doing and seeing online. Starting these conversations can sometimes feel daunting, but they can help you feel more informed and show your child that you are taking an interest in their online life. Not sure where to begin? Use the tips and conversations starters in our "Let's Talk About Life Online" resource.</p>
<p>Manage influence by taking a balanced approach The internet can be a great place to find content or influencers that inspire you. There is a wide range of voices and information online, but it is important to take a balanced approach when interacting with content so you can form your own opinions and understand the facts. Make sure to do your own research and use multiple sources.</p>	<p>Manage influence by making positive choices There is a huge amount of inspiring and engaging content online, but sometimes the things we see and hear on the internet can affect our feelings and behaviour. Make sensible and informed choices about who you want to follow and interact with online by reflecting on how they make you feel. Remember it's okay to unfollow, mute or block accounts and keywords if they're making you feel upset or uncomfortable.</p>	<p>Manage influence by researching the content and games your child enjoys the most Giving young people the opportunity to talk about their life online, and enjoying online content together, can be a great way to gain an insight into the content they are viewing. Our 'Parents and Carers Resource Sheet' is a great tool that you can use to research any websites, apps and games and find out more about specific content.</p>
<p>Navigate change by talking about it The online world is always changing, with game updates, new content and services, and breaking news stories. Change is an important part of life and can be exciting but can sometimes feel overwhelming too. Talking to friends, family or trusted adults can help you to manage these emotions and understand what is going on.</p>	<p>Navigate change by talking about it The online world is changing all the time, with exciting new developments, trends and technology. However, if you're finding change overwhelming or feeling pressure to stay up to date, then it's always best to talk about it. Talk with friends, family or an adult you trust about what's going on and how it makes you feel – even if they can't fix it for you straightaway, they can offer support and may even be going through the same thing.</p>	<p>Navigate change by knowing where to go for further support If your child needs help, it's important you know where to go for further support. Using the report and block buttons, websites such as 'Report Harmful Content', and other safety tools is a great starting point. It can also be useful to discuss any concerns or worries with your child's school as they may be able to offer further advice and guidance. It can also help to talk to other parents and carers who may have experienced something similar.</p>