Helena Romanes School - Primary
SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
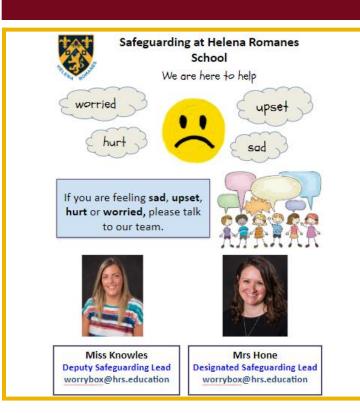**Spring 1 2024**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Each half term we aim to bring you relevant help and advice on safeguarding issues we feel will be of importance to you. Teaching children how to keep themselves safe is a key part of our curriculum and we develop these skills through PSHE and computing lessons, assemblies and various events and visitors across the year. You will see information at the bottom of the page about who to speak to if you have concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Some of the children may have received new devices for Christmas so this half term we have also included some additional information about supporting children to stay safe online.

Setting Limits on Screen Time

When children receive a new device, they will naturally want to spend as much time on it as possible. However, the nature of online games and videos means that it is easy for children to get attached very quickly. For this reason, it can be helpful to make sure that spending time with family and friends, getting outdoors and doing some exercise also forms part of their daily routine. Watching a screen for too long can interfere with their sleep and have an impact on their mood and behavior. It might be useful to agree on certain times of day when your child don't use their device. Most devices' settings let you specify a screen-time limit, helping your child stay fresh and focused in order to be at their best at school.

Age Ratings

One of the first things children want to do with any device is play games and explore apps. Before they download or install a new game, check its age rating to make sure that it is appropriate. Many popular games and apps have content that is not suitable for younger ages even though the advertising can make it appealing to younger children. The safest long-term solution is to adjust the device's settings so they can only download and use games appropriate for their age. Please be aware that Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter all have a minimum user age of 13 and Tumblr, WhatsApp and YouTube have a minimum user age of 16. Please make sure you always review new content to check it is appropriate for your child.

Safeguarding at Helena Romanes School
We are here to help

worried   upset
hurt   sad

If you are feeling **sad, upset, hurt** or **worried**, please talk to our team.

Miss Knowles
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education

Mrs Hone
Designated Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education

Online Safety

The online world is full of exciting activities so you might want to take the opportunity to engage in playing games and watching videos together. You might find it useful to talk to your child about what they activities they enjoy doing online, in the same way you would ask them about their day at school. The more it becomes part of your everyday conversation, the more likely they are to talk to you if there is a problem or they see something inappropriate online.

The following websites have lots of useful information about how you can ensure your child stays safe online:

NSPCC

UK Safer Internet Centre

Top Tips for...
MANAGING SCREEN TIME

According to the latest stats, people aged between 8 and 17 spend four hours on digital devices during an average day. Obviously, a new year is ideal for fresh starts and renewed efforts – so lots of families are trying to cut down their combined screen time right now, creating more moments to connect with each other and relying less on gadgets to have fun. Our top tips on reducing screen time are for everyone, so you can get your whole family involved in turning over a new leaf this year!

GET OUT AND ABOUT

If the weather's decent, spend some time in the garden or go for a walk. Even a stroll to the local shop would do: the main thing is getting some fresh air and a break from your screen.

TRY A TIMED TRIAL

When you're taking a screen break to do a different activity or a chore, turn it into a game by setting yourself a timer. Can you complete your task before the alarm goes off?

GO DIGITAL DETOX

Challenge yourself and your family to take time off from screens, finding other things to do. You could start off with half a day, then build up to a full day or even an entire weekend.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Let your family see you successfully managing your own screen time. You'll be showing them the way, and it might stop some of those grumbles when you do want to go online.

AGREE TECH-FREE ZONES

Nominate some spots at home where devices aren't allowed. Anywhere your family gathers together, like at the table or in the living room, could become a 'no phone zone'.

HOLD A SCREEN TIME AMNESTY

As a family, agree specific windows when it's OK to use devices. This should help everyone to balance time on phones or gaming with enjoying quality moments together.

BE MINDFUL OF TIME

Stay aware of how long you've been on your device for. Controlling how much time you spend in potentially stressful areas of the internet – like social media platforms – can also boost your wellbeing.

'PARK' PHONES OVERNIGHT

Set up an overnight charging station for everyone's devices – preferably away from bedrooms. That means less temptation for late-night scrolling.

SWITCH ON DND

Research shows that micro-distractions like message alerts and push notifications can chip away at our concentration levels. Put devices on 'do not disturb' until you're less busy.

TAKE A FAMILY TECH BREAK

Set aside certain times when the whole family puts their gadgets away and enjoys an activity together: playing a board game, going for a walk or just having a chat.

SOCIALISE WITHOUT SCREENS

When you're with friends, try not to automatically involve phones, TVs or other tech. Having company can be loads more fun if your attention isn't being split.

WIND DOWN PROPERLY

Try staying off phones, consoles, tablets and so on just before you go to sleep. Reading or just getting comfy in bed for a while can give you a much more restful night.

DEVICE BOX

Meet Our Expert

The National College

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday