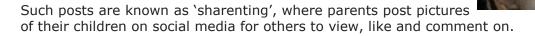## New Year Online Safety Top Tips:

New Year can be a time for us all to reflect. It is a chance to celebrate the year we are leaving behind and welcome the unknown excitement of the new year to come. After all the demands of the Christmas pressures and stress, it can be a time for us all to finally relax. However, even though we are all wanting to unwind, we need to be mindful that online there are still many hidden dangers. So, make sure you're starting your New Year wiser, be better prepared for the online dangers and enjoy a safer start to your New Year.

1. It may be a good time to have a digital detox. Encourage all your family to take a break from digital devices. Agree a period of time each day where you will all have time out from technology.
2. Choose strong passwords.
3. Check your privacy settings are turned on.
4. Ensure your internet connection is secure.
5. Be a selective sharer – be careful what you post.

For more information take a look at our downloadable **Get Safe Online in West Sussex Leaflet** and our **Guide to Keeping your Children Safe Online** at www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online

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Sharenting

Everything you do or post online adds to your digital footprint and can potentially be seen or stored by others. Many children's digital footprint is literally starting before they are even born with photos of their ultrasounds being posted online. Following, come the baby photos and other important milestones such as birthdays and their first day at school.

Such posts are known as 'sharenting', where parents post pictures of their children on social media for others to view, like and comment on.

What are the risks?

- Innocent photos could easily fall into the wrong hands. The impacts can be:
- Having these readily available images uploaded onto other websites without permission.
- Stealing identities.
- Or falling into the hands of online predators.

Such posts could also lead to future embarrassment of a child, especially when they become older. As parents, we need to be mindful that our children have not consented to these posts and consider how the child will feel and what the impact can be.

Furthermore, if images are shared with a location tagged, or a school name listed, it's very easy to determine a child's location; this leaves them vulnerable to unimaginable risks.

What can you do to minimise the risk?

- Check privacy settings – Check who can see your posts and make sure they aren't public.
- Think before posting – Could this post prove embarrassing for my child when they're older? Could this comment be taken out of context? If in doubt, don't share.
- Talk to your child – When your child is old enough to grasp social media, ask if they are okay with you sharing a post or photo of them. Or maybe wait till they are of an age they can give you their consent they are happy for you to do this.
- Don't share – One of the best ways to keep your child safe online is not to share photos and posts about them at all.

In support of **Safer Internet day,** which takes place 11th February 2020, we are running Parent/Carer sessions across county. Some of which include:

- Jan 16th - Southgate Primary Crawley - Parent/Carer session
- Feb 4th - Ashurst Wood Primary East Grinstead - Parent/Carer Session
- Feb 10th - Lyndhurst Infants Worthing - Parent/Carer Session
- Feb 12th - Upper Beeding Primary Steyning - Parent/Carer Session
- Feb 18th - Imberhorne School East Grinstead - Parent/Carer Session
- Feb 24th - West Park Primary Worthing - Parent/Carer Session
- Feb 27th Felpham Community College Bognor Regis - Parent/Carer Session
- March 10th - Maindenbower Infants Crawley - Parent/Carer Session
- March 12th - QEII School Horsham - Parent/Carer Session
- March 17th Bishop Luffa Chichester - Parent/Carer Session
- March 19th - Bolney CofE Primary Haywards Heath - Parent/Carer Session
- March 23rd Oriel High School Crawley - Parent/Carer Session
- May 7th Chichester High School Chichester - Parent/Carer Session

Visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online events and training page to book a place – places are limited so book quickly!

Are you Following us on Twitter and Facebook?

For the latest information about all things online safety, and for information about local events and campaigns, follow us! **@WSxSafeOnline**