Dear Parents/Carers,

Tuesday 6th February will be 'Safer Internet Day'

The internet has changed all of our lives, particularly our children's. It is a fantastic and exciting resource with so many benefits. However, for parents and carers this opens up a whole new world of things to be aware of; inappropriate websites, grooming, cyberbullying, loss of control of pictures and videos, viruses, hacking and security.

For many of us, this can all be a bit too much. You might be struggling to keep up with the things your child is doing online, you might wonder whether what they are doing is safe, and you might also be thinking *how can I be as good a parent online as I am offline*?

Lots of fantastic support is available at www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents a site that aims to make online parenting easy. This website supports parents and carers in protecting their children from abuse online. The site provides advice for parents who are concerned about their children, as well as those just looking to learn more about what they can do to keep their children safe.

There are guides to social media sites as well as information and advice, and this site has up to date advice for parents on some of the latest issues.

We very much believe that tackling the safety issues our children will face in the online world is a **shared responsibility**. We need to work together to help the children take control of their online behaviour to stay safe. Many of you attended our recent Right Click workshop, and we informed you in last month's Newsletter of how impressed the trainers were with our pupils' knowledge in the area of e-safety. However new apps and on-line games are introduced with such frequency that it can be hard for many of us to stay on top of our children's online life. Young people often appear so much more computer savvy than us adults, and yet we are the ones entrusted to safeguard them!

St George's School has rigorous measures in place to ensure online safety in school; however one gap can often be parental knowledge around this area.

The UK Safer Internet Safer offers four pieces of key advice to parents and carers:

- Have ongoing conversations with your children about staying safe online
- Use safety tools on social networks and other online services e.g. Facebook privacy settings
- Decide if you want to use parental controls on your home internet
- Understand devices and the parental control tools they offer in the Parents' Guide to Technology – available from UK Safer Internet Centre

"*Ourpact*" is a parental control app which allows parents to block the child's Wi-Fi for whatever time length they choose. It can be used with iPhones, iPads and iPods as well as with Android devices.

This app enables parents to set limits on how much time children spend online as well as creating schedules and blocking all internet and app use at a moment's notice. There is a parental monitor dashboard on the app. You can find further information and download the app from their website Ourpact

If you are ever concerned about your child's welfare or safety online, use the CEOP button. All of our students will be aware of this button and that the report generated by clicking on this button goes directly to the specialist police working at CEOP.

Other websites you may find useful are:

Kidsmart – has been developed by the charity Childnet International and has information on many of the technologies used by children with guidance on how to stay safe online.

Parentinfo - contains lots of good e safety advice as well as other useful information.

Internetmatters - lots of guidance and articles about keeping children safe online.

Vodafone Digital Parenting - provides information and guidance to parents to help understand the digital world.

There will be a Safer Internet assembly on the 6th and throughout the week the children will be participating in workshops to support their learning about staying safe online. Please do ask your children what they have been up to and what they have found out.

We will be sending out a Family Agreement as next week's Talk Homework along with a prompt sheet to get the conversation started with the whole family about how you all use the internet and keeping safe.

As safeguarding leads Mrs Sadiq and I will be running an E-Safety workshop for parents at 2.30pm on Thursday 8th March – all are welcome. We also have a Parents Evening coming up on the 22nd March. Should you have any queries about our e-safety or ICT curriculum please do ask your child's class teacher.

We hope that you find the information in this communication helpful.

Yours sincerely

J Shaw
Head of Lower School