



AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Cadbury Heath, Oldland Common and Barrs Court Neighbourhood Policing Team
Staple Hill Police Station, Broad Street, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS165LX
Neighbourhood Beat Manager: PC 3921 Phil Busvine
Community Support Officers: PCSO 7174 Libby Speechley and PCSO 9752 Kayleigh Lunn

Dear Parents,

As you are probably aware I have recently attended St Anne's Primary School to deliver some talks on Internet Safety and felt it required some feedback to you. I am essentially telling you what I have told the parents who attended my talk at the beginning of the day. I tried to keep this short but there's so much I felt you needed to know I've ended up on two pages. Please bear with me and read to the end, this is important.

I wanted to share with you some of the things that have genuinely been said to me by the pupils of St. Anne's School, and another local primary school, whilst I have been delivering internet safety talks over the past week.

- I was playing a video game and a random person I didn't know started talking to me on chat. He asked me where I lived. (Year 4)
- I have a new app called 'Monkey'. I can facetime anyone else in the whole world. (Year 5)
- I am on a group chat with some of the girls in my class. When I'm trying to go to sleep my phone is always ringing and vibrating because people are talking after bed time. (Year 5)
- I turned my phone off when I went to bed. When I turned it back on I had over 2000 messages from my classmates that had been sent in one night (Year 6)

Quite frankly, this is disturbing. In each class I raised the fact that if a strange man/woman in the playground asked them to come with them would they go? I was met by a loud and defiant "NO" which was very reassuring. However, as you can see, if that strange man or woman was talking to them using an app or via a videogame your children ARE engaging with them.

I'm going to pick on the "Monkey" app, seeing as it has been named to me. This app is aimed at teenagers and randomly matches users on a video chat. It is 'self-policed' so any inappropriate behaviour should be reported by the user – this means no one is proactively monitoring who is using that app, whoever they are or wherever they come from. Anyone can download and sign up for it.

According to Monkey's terms and conditions you have to be 13 years old minimum to use it. Incidentally, you also have to be 13 to use Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. For Musically (which I'm told is the latest craze) the Apple Store Rating is 12+ for a number of reasons including "violence, profanity, drug use, sexual content and nudity". **None of the children who attend St Anne's are old enough to be using these apps.** According to the user agreements, a parent/guardian is responsible for downloading the app for under 13s and monitoring usage. If your child has any of these apps without your knowledge they may have lied about their age to download it, and what else are they lying about when it comes to online activity?

I also asked your children how many of them had a phone/tablet or console in their bedroom. A lot of hands were going up. When I asked “be honest, when mum and dad leave the room, how many of you are tempted to have a look or a play on them?” those hands went up again. Who knows what they’ve been getting up to when they should be sleeping?

I don’t want to frighten you, but I want you to know the reality of what is or could be happening when your children are using technology. Let’s go through some solutions to these problems.

Personally, being in my mid-20s, I struggle to ignore the light flashing on my phone if I get a notification whilst I’m trying to sleep, so can a 8,9, or 10 year old be expected to do so? The answer is simple: devices stay downstairs. If the device is not in their room, they cannot be tempted by it, they cannot be distracted by it and most importantly, they cannot use it unsupervised. This means they can’t get themselves into trouble accessing random content or talking to people they shouldn’t be after dark.

Secondly, you can adjust parental controls in the settings menu of your internet browsers. This means you can block pages with swearing, graphic or generally inappropriate content in much the same way a school/business computer does. For the more tech savvy of you, there’s even “Parental Control” apps you can download from Google Play or The Apple Store which can limit content, put time limits on, locate devices and filter websites.

If your child is ever involved in an instance of cyber-bullying, online grooming or any other online incident please make sure you take screen shots or photos of what has been posted. This way, anything that’s deleted won’t be lost in the ether and there is evidence of what happened. Inappropriate content should be reported to the website itself, especially on Social Media. Block and delete any accounts or users who are strangers or who you feel should not be contacting your child.

If it goes beyond inappropriate and you need to report to the Police please do so by calling 101 (or, obviously, 999 in an emergency). DO NOT retaliate – this could escalate the situation and you yourself could commit offences. Screenshot the incident and show it to us.

Below are some websites which might help – (There are many more that can be found with an internet search)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

Thank you for reading. If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch via 101 or on the beat website: <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area/cadbury-heath-oldland/>

Yours Sincerely,

Libby Speechley

Police Community Support Officer
Cadbury Heath, Barrs Court & Oldland Common