5 TIPS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

GUIDE YOUNG USERS TO NAVIGATE THE INTERNET SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY.

Besides watching videos and playing games online, today's preschoolers are also learning how to access the Internet for information, knowledge and communication. While this is important, Internet devices could expose them to dangers such as inappropriate content, cyber bullying, predators and identity thieves. Rather than completely restricting children's access to the Internet, parents should raise awareness of potential risks and guide them on how to address these.

1 KEEP DEVICES IN SIGHT

Monitor your child when they are using Internet devices. Check in to see what they are viewing online or intervene if they are spending too much time playing video games. Using devices in an open area, such as the living room or dining room, also deters children from doing something they know they are not allowed to do.

2 LAY DOWN RULES AND BOUNDARIES

Use a shared family device where children will need to seek permission or wait their turn. Limit screen time, or set a time and duration, such as allowing video games to be played for 15 minutes before dinner. Model positive online behaviour, such as respectful comments to friends' and family's social media posts. Explain what appropriate and inappropriate communication is, as well as cyberbullying.

3 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Review apps and programmes to ensure they are suitable. Check browser histories and the recycle bin to vet the sites your child has visited. From time to time, sit with them to ensure the games they play and the videos they watch are appropriate. Have conversations with your child. For example, you can start with, "That looks like an interesting game. Can you teach me to play too?", and then use the opportunity to talk about appropriate content or online safety.

4 INSTALL PARENTAL CONTROLS

Adjust privacy settings on devices. Use parental controls to set screen time limits. Use safe search or content restriction settings on browsers to filter out inappropriate websites and content. If you use TV streaming services, set up profiles for different members. Block in-app purchases and disable one-click payment options. You can also disable camera and video functions to prevent children from accidentally taking and posting photos or video clips of themselves.

5 DISCUSS THE DANGERS

Talk about online dangers and how to recognise suspicious behaviour or activity. Some video games have in-game messaging features that may allow strangers to communicate with your child. Highlight the risks of communicating with people they do not know and divulging personal information (e.g. phone numbers, where they stay, which preschool they go to). When you come across dubious links or pop-up ads, explain why one should not click on them. Encourage your child to ask you if they are unsure or curious about what they see online.

For information on media literacy, visit **www.betterinternet.sg** or scan this QR code.