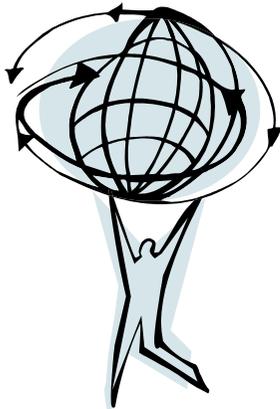## About this leaflet

This leaflet is designed to be a starting point—no more. Hopefully, it has provided sufficient information to help you get started in the job of guiding our child towards becoming more aware of the dangers they might face when using information and communication technologies. Further information can be obtained via the weblinks provided.

"Kids don't need protection we need guidance. If you protect us you are making us weaker we don't go through all the trial and error necessary to learn what we need to survive on our own…don't fight our battles for us just give us assistance when we need it."

(A quote from a child reported by Dr Tanya Byron in: Byron Review – Children and New Technology)

e ICT Support
Raising Standards & Empowering Learners

www.e-ictsupport.org.uk

E-safety for Parents

Gwenllian South, ICT Adviser

Essex County Council

Keeping your child safe

Introduction

For young people the internet, and the increasing number of digital devices they use to connect to it, is an integral part of their everyday lives. Whether they use it to express themselves or to stay in touch with friends, for entertainment or education, the internet can provide tremendous benefits and most use it safely. But while digital technology provides a wealth of opportunities, we are all aware that there are online risks and sometimes these risks can lead to harm. At the same time, while young people's 'offline' and 'online' worlds are often merging, the behaviours and safeguards of the 'real' world are not always applied in a 'virtual' world where friends can be added at the click of button and information shared in an instant.

EU Kids Online is a research project which surveyed 25,000 children and their parents across Europe to understand the true online risks and opportunities. It defines the risks young people might be exposed to online under three key headings:

Content: harm that can arise from exposure to age inappropriate, distasteful or illegal content

Conduct: harm that can arise from how young people behave online

Contact: harm that can arise from interactions with other individuals online

A fourth category **'Commerce'** is also sometimes added. This reflects the concerns that some have about the exposure of children to messages of a sexual and commercial nature.

Although many children are taught some aspects of internet safety in school, you too can play an important part in helping to safeguard young people online.

What can I do?

Talk to your child about who they're talking to online and encourage them to think before talking to people they don't know in person. Encourage them also to think about what sort of information they might be sharing.

Try to understand and guide your child's online behaviour - negotiate and establish boundaries and discuss sensitively the issues around concepts such as 'friendship'.

Familiarise yourself with any programmes or websites your child uses.

Ask your child if they know how to block or report someone who they don't want to talk to. If they don't, help them to learn how to use the blocking feature.

Use parental control software provided by your internet service provider, mobile phone network, online content provider or games console and consider using filtering options, monitoring and setting time limits for access to chat...but don't forget these don't block or flag up everything!

If you discover misconduct between your child and someone online stay calm, investigate the facts and seek expert help if needed.

If appropriate, as part of a wider discussion about sex and relationships, cover how people may use the internet to explore their sexuality, their ability to exploit and even harm others, etc.

Useful Contacts/Resources

The school 'Designated Person' and/or e-Safety Officer
Childline (0800 1111)
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
Thinkuknow.co.uk
CyberMentors.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation (iwf.org.uk)
GetSafeOnline.org