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Scoil Lios na Groí
Lisnagry National School

February 10th, 2015

Dear Parents

As you may be aware, today February 10th is Safer Internet Day. All classes will do different activities to reiterate the importance of internet safety. Our local Community Garda Ciara Gaynor visited the school today and spoke with the senior classes about cyber bullying. In school the internet access is restricted and known social networking sites are blocked. As the majority of time that children spend on the internet is at home it is important that you the parents and guardians understand the potential dangers and what can be done to avoid them.

Internet safety used to be all about keeping children away from inappropriate content and illegal websites. While that is still a concern, internet safety has changed as the internet has evolved. The communication explosion that has made the world closely connected has not made the world safer. Many real-world hazards have migrated to cyber space, such as bullying, threats and predators and parents need to be proactively involved in their children's internet world more than ever before.

Children are growing up with technology. Increasing numbers of primary school children have smart phones and are using Snapchat, Instagram and other media-sharing platforms. It is part of their everyday lives, mostly for the better but sometimes for the worst. The internet as a medium promotes communication and socialisation, but often without restraint. Children don't realise that there are real life consequences for poor online choices. It doesn't occur to them that what they post online can be copied, saved and forwarded to others and remain long after the original has been deleted. They feel anonymous when they create screen names and online personas that can be totally different than who they are in real life. They can fall in with a bad crowd, communicate the wrong things, get to know the wrong people and endanger themselves and those around them. They just get swept along with what their peers are doing and lose awareness of the many dangers they are facing.

Our school website www.lisnagryns.ie has suggested a number of sites to help parents and children learn about internet safety. These are available under the parents tab on the homepage. There is a lot of practical information and links to resources that will empower you as a parent to proactively supervise your children's online activities and help keep your child safe when using the internet. You need to be aware of your children's privacy settings and filtering software. The website www.webwise.ie has great advice for parents also.

We urge you to become more involved in your child's online life as it has become a much bigger part of their everyday lives.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Feeney

Principal