CONVERSATION STARTERS

ASK YOUR CHILD ....

Maintaining communication with your little ones is critical to making sure their time online or on other technology is fun and safe. Of course you don't want to sound like you're setting your child up to get 'caught out' or 'in trouble'.

Through thoughtful questioning you can get a picture of how your child is using technology now and how you can help them to manage it better (see the rules and boundaries of this course for more guidelines)

It's a good idea to start by asking about their friends as it feels less likely that they are going to get into trouble.

- Do your friends use the computer?
- What do they do on the computer?

Move on by asking really **general questions** and then **prompt** to find out more when you feel there is a need.

- What do you like about the computer?
- What do you like to do on your iPad (iPod/tablet....)
- Can I join you? Can you tell me about this?
- What places do you like to visit online?
- Who are your favourite characters? (Young children often watch TV on line)
- What websites or games do you think you probably spend the most time in?
- Are you having fun? (The internet can be a great source of entertainment and education, when managed right in the home.)

It's important to establish whether your child is **playing games online with people you do not know.**

- What can you tell me (about the game you're playing/ the application you're using?) Get them to teach you how it works. Get excited and involved (or at least show a genuine interest so they are happy to share)
    - Who are you playing with?
    - Can you talk to them in the game?
        - (If yes) What sorts of things do you talk about?
- Do you have friends you play with on the computer?
    - (If yes) What are their names?
    - How did you become friends?

This is a great way to lead into the discussion about house rules for safe fun play.

We don't play or talk to people we don't know in the physical world.

Ask **specific questions** if you are worried.

- Have you got any questions?
- Is anything upsetting you?
    - You can tell me anything about what happens on the computer, I'm here to help you have fun and learn.
- Is anything on the computer worrying you?
- It is ok if you make a mistake, you can tell me. I can help you work it out.

If someone is not nice to you on the internet you can tell me or another adult. I can help you, but if I don't know about it I cannot help.

Make talking about technology and the internet a normal part of your life.

Note – with boys, it is often a good idea to have these conversations while their hands are busy or you're not looking directly at each other. Try it while doing Lego or a jigsaw or when they are actually playing online.

The eSafety Commission has further information about <u>Starting the Chat</u>.