SmarTone

Understand the Internet World of Your Children

SmarTone cares about your children's development. With the rise of smartphones, apps and social networking platforms permeate every aspect of children's lives and impact their development in different ways.

Research* shows that pre-school children start using smart devices at the average age of 16 months old. What's more, a staggering of 99.5% of children aged between 10 to 14 years old access the internet regularly.

There are both positive and negative impacts with the growing use of internet. It is important for parents to communicate openly with their children in order to learn more about their online activities and guide them the proper use of the internet. Parents can foster a more intimate parent-child relationship if they can offer a listening ear and emotional support when children are faced with confusion and dangers online.

*Data Source: "Thematic Household Survey Report No. 64 - Personal computer and Internet penetration", Census and Statistics Department, 2018

Raise the Awareness of Online Safety for You and Your Children

Parents should be alert about the use of internet to avoid personal data leakage, and educate their children to use instant messaging software and social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, Snapchat, etc. securely and responsibly.

Use of privacy settings:
The privacy settings on different social media apps and websites vary. Parents should set up appropriate online privacy settings together with children including limiting the audience for posts, photos, and check-ins, and whether or not to allow strangers to send friend requests or inbox messages. Personal information privacy settings can help prevent strangers from tracking your habits and whereabouts.

Protecting personal information:
Remind your children not to disclose personal information such as home address, phone number and other sensitive information online unnecessarily.

Be aware of the dangers of social media posting:
Ingrain a cautious mindset into your children for sharing photos online. It is equally important to evaluate the risks for sharing personal information.

Use anti-cyberattack software:
Mobile anti-virus software is readily available in the market. SmarTone also offers anti-virus software - ST Protect providing total protection for smartphones, it safeguards your mobile devices from viruses, malware attacks or WiFi fraud to protect your mobile phone as well as personal information.

Block Access to Pornographic or Violent Content

Talk to your children openly if you find out that they have accessed inappropriate content. Consider using the following tools to block or filter inappropriate content.

Netnanny
Filter websites and monitor children's online/ social media activities.

Qustodio
Control screen-time/ Set internet time limit and the type of websites that can be viewed.

Prevent Excessive Internet or Smartphone Use

To prevent your children from overexposure and addiction to smartphones or computers, parents can employ three methods: data usage control, cultivating interests and time management.

With SmarTone "Flexible Data Allocation" function which is available for SmarTone Family Plan users, parents can allocate data usage limit. Also, parents can cultivate a variety of interests with their children, from exercises to group extra-curricular activities to reduce screen time. In addition, there are free apps available as shown below for parents to manage their children's internet time:

MMGuardian Parental Control
It can set internet time and restrict rights to download app. It also displays the location of your children on demand.

OurPact
It can block websites and applications as well as setting screen time.

Prevent Unexpected Online Spending

Children do not have a strong concept about money. To avoid unexpected or excessive online spending, parents can restrict in-app purchases on iOS or Android operating system on their children's phone.

With iOS, parents can exercise parental control by activating the two functions - "Ask to Buy" under setting. For any new purchases or free app download requests, Apple will first ask parents for approval to avoid accidental in-app purchases and random app downloading.

Step 1: [Settings] > [your name] > [Family sharing] and click on the name of the family member
Step 2: Click [Ask to Buy]

You can also set up parental monitoring on Google Play to limit children's right to download or purchase from Google Play to their devices.

Step 1: Google Play Store > [Menu] > [Settings] > [Require authentication for purchases]
Step 2: Choose a setting

Internet has become an integral part of our everyday lives. It is important for parents to be open-minded and talk openly with their children in order to understand more about their online activities and guide them the proper way of internet and smartphone use.

Please call 2880 2688 or visit SmarTone stores if you have further questions. We are more than happy to provide further information and services.

For further information, please go to Student Health Service of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government: www.studenthealth.gov.hk/english/internet/health_effects.html

In cooperation with:

Save the Children 救助兒童會

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