Top Tips for Parents

It is really important to remember is that the internet is a fantastic resource and can stimulate learning for your child. The internet has many positives, but you need to remember it also carries risks. With the advances in mobile technologies it is becoming more than likely that your child has access to the internet via their mobile phones from anywhere at any time, which is why education in this area is so important.

- Keep the computer in a family room. Children will be less likely to be inappropriate online if you are sitting behind them on the sofa watching TV!
- Ask your children to teach you how to use applications. There is a huge gap between what children use the internet for and what their parents know about the internet. Ask your children to explain to you about IM (instant messaging) or chat rooms. It may be difficult at first, but persevere as it will be worth it.
- Help your child to understand that some people lie online. They should never meet up with anyone that they have met online without a trusted adult. It's best to keep online mates online.
- Keep personal information private. Discuss with them who should they shared information with – if anyone. The internet essentially is a public place. You wouldn't parade through Bromley town centre with a billboard publishing all your personal information so don't put it online either! Personal information includes their messenger ID, e-mail address, mobile number and pictures and videos of themselves, family and friends. Once a picture of video is published online, anyone can copy it, change it or share it. Remind them that anyone may be looking at their images – including one day future employers! Remind them that they should be very careful about their social networking space and ensure the privacy settings on this are set up properly.
- If your child receives spam/junk e-mails and texts (including chain ones about how many people you have to send something on to) remind them never to believe them, reply to them, forward them or use them. Don't open files from people you don't know – you don't know what they might contain, it could be a virus or worse an inappropriate image or film.
- Most importantly keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable. Try not to judge and ask for advice if necessary. Children often find themselves in difficult situations through fear of 'getting in trouble' if they tell, especially if they have been a bit silly in the first place.