



STAMP OUT CYBERBULLYING & KEEP SAFE!

SOCKS! was created by a Paediatric Doctor to increase knowledge and awareness of online safety in Primary School children, after seeing a number of adolescent patients struggling with the effects of cyberbullying. The majority of online safety teaching currently focusses on secondary school pupils but a pilot study, conducted on 180 children in Years 5/6, showed that 30% already have a social media profile and 11% of children admitted that they have friends they only know online.

Pilot study results:

- One 10-year-old boy stated: "Snapchat is my life!"
- One girl said she has over 1000 followers on Instagram - at the age of 10.
- 80% of the year 6 boys at one school (32/40) admitted that they spoke to strangers daily whilst gaming, and many reported verbal abuse from them.
- One 10-year-old boy reported that a stranger requested his parents' credit card details, whilst he played 'Fortnite' online.
- Two 9-year-old boys were sent inappropriate images playing 'Fortnite'.

It is crucial that these vulnerable young people are given the tools they need to keep themselves safe online at the time they really need it.

This SOCKS! workshop is designed to be a one-hour long, thought-provoking teaching session to initiate discussion around various aspects of online safety.

The group scenarios discuss:

- 1) grooming and escalation of blackmail
- 2) cyberbullying and harm from online comments
- 3) sexting

This workshop provides a good opportunity for teachers to elicit pupils understanding and experience within the group discussions and then to share key supportive messages with the wider group. Although this is a one-off workshop it is recommended that this serves as a platform to establish an open dialogue around online safety between staff and pupils.

The key messages from the SOCKS! workshop could easily be revisited on a regular basis to reinforce and remind pupils about what they have learnt.

Key message for teachers: Talk to the children regularly about the online world and be an available, non-judgmental, ear for them to talk to.

