



ANNUAL REPORT **2018**



OUR VISION

A world in which children are using technology in a safe, positive and successful manner.

OUR MISSION

To empower children, parents and teachers to navigate the online world in a stronger, smarter and safer way.

DIRECTORS



Ms. Ursula McMahon



Prof. Joseph Carthy



Prof. Brian O'Neill



Mrs. Avril Ronan Naughton



Mr. John Fitzsimons



Ms. Fiona Conway



Ms. Derval Blehein



Mr. Michael Moran

COMPANY SECRETARY

Ms. Ursula McMahon

CHARITY NUMBER

20104108

COMPANY NUMBER

568651

REGISTERED OFFICE

93 Upper George's Street
Dun Laoghaire
Co Dublin

AUDITORS

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Foreword | Professor Brian O'Neill

Online safety remains a topic of vital public concern and CyberSafelreland's commitment to ensuring children can use technology in a safe, positive and successful manner meets an important public need against the backdrop of persistent challenges which children, parents and teachers encounter. The publication of this year's Annual Report provides another valuable opportunity to reflect on the many insights which its data reveals of the experiences of more than 4,300 children and 1,200 parents who participated in its online safety training sessions over the course of the last academic year (2018-19).

The objective of CyberSafelreland is to make a difference in keeping children safe online. Everyone has a part to play in this process including children themselves. Its particular focus on supporting children 8 to 13 years of age through training talks in schools is especially needed given the general lack of provision for this age group generally despite – as the report shows – the striking level of digital activity by children in this age group. CyberSafelreland believes that education is a key part of the solution and with support from its partners wants to be at the forefront of giving children, parents and schools a head-start in keeping the next generation safe online.

CyberSafelreland clearly recognises that the internet is inescapably an integral part of everyday life for children in Ireland today. Data from this year's survey of participating schools shows that the vast majority of children (92%), aged 8-13, owns a smart device that connects to the internet. As with so many factors impacting on children's development, this can be beneficial but also potentially problematic. For many children, entertainment services on the many video sharing platforms are an irresistible pastime and source of fun, integrated as they are with the world of children's media entertainment. However, as the survey data shows, use of smart devices also acts as something of a gateway to the world of social media.

In May of this year, one year on from the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), CyberSafelreland commissioned research to examine the impact of the digital age of consent on age verification practices of social media platforms and messaging apps. The findings were stark. Despite the age limit of 13 for the most popular social media and messaging services including Snapchat, Instagram, Messenger, TikTok etc. (age 16 in the case of WhatsApp), the research found that the registration procedures were such that children could easily circumvent them by entering a false age. Some services do not even ask for an age when registering a new account. Of the services tested, only Skype was found to require the approval of a parent up to the age of consent. Although Instagram and Facebook suggest that users who declare their ages to

be between 13 and 15 do gain parental approval via email or other means, they can skip this step. The setting of the digital age of consent in Ireland at 16 (the age at which children are able to freely consent to have their data processed) would appear to have had little or no impact on chil-



dren's free access to these services. While it can't be taken as nationally representative, CyberSafelreland's data shows that just under half of children aged 8 and 9, and 83% of 12 year olds were active on social media. Snapchat remains the most popular app used by a third of the participating 8-13 year olds and approximately a quarter use WhatsApp and Instagram.

These findings present very challenging dilemmas for parents and teachers who mindful of not wanting children to miss out on valuable digital opportunities have to navigate uncertain safety provisions, ill-suited platforms and limited resources for teaching good practices of digital literacy and cyber hygiene. It is great to see that CyberSafelreland's training initiatives have received such positive feedback. Over 80% of teachers rated the workshops as Excellent with three quarters of the participating children (73%) described as being 'very engaged'. It is also very positive to see that most children have spoken to their parents (or their parents have had conversations with them) about online safety. There is little doubt, however, that both schools' and parents' engagement (and mediation) in the digital lives of children needs to develop further and be supported by government action, investment in education and awareness raising, and greater industry commitment to ensuring children can navigate the online world in a 'stronger, smarter and safer way'.



Professor Brian O'Neill

Professor Brian O'Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology, is a researcher of young people's use of digital technologies, online safety and policy for the digital environment. He is member of the Internet Safety Advisory Board for the Safer Internet Ireland programme. He also leads the EU Kids Online project in Ireland and is a board director for CyberSafelreland. He is the co-author of Towards a Better Internet for Children? Policy Pillars, Players and Paradoxes published by Nordicom.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- 92% of 8 – 13 year olds own their own smart device
- 12% of children are spending 4+ hours online including 15% of 12 year olds and 12% of 8 year olds. Boys are spending more time online than girls (15% of boys are spending 4+ hours online daily vs. 9% of girls).
- 43% of children overall are talking to people that they don't know in real life online in some capacity; 33% of children are talking to strangers online every week (17% every day). Boys are much more likely to be chatting to strangers regularly.
- 36% of children are rarely or never talking to their parents about online safety (20% higher than last year) and boys are much less likely to be regularly talking to parents.
- Snapchat remains the most popular app for children aged between 8 and 13 with 33% of children overall on it, followed by WhatsApp (28%), Instagram (23%) and TikTok (21%).
- 29% of children have played over 18 games with significantly more boys (47%) playing them than girls (12%). 36% of 8 year old boys have played over-18s games.
- The majority of teachers (59%) are dealing with online safety incidences in the classroom with 10% dealing with more than 5 incidences in the last year – a 100% increase on last year's figure. This is a particular challenge given that 52% teachers don't feel equipped to teach online safety messages in the classroom.
- Children in schools in more disadvantaged areas are 29% more likely to talk to strangers every day and are 42% more likely to be online for 4+hours a day.

Introduction | Avril Ronan Naughton, Chairperson

I am delighted to present this report on behalf of CyberSafelreland CLG in my capacity as Chair of the Board of Directors. The report provides audited accounts and an organisational overview, including governance, for the period January to December 2018 and in the second part of the report we provide a presentation of the data we have collected from children, parents and teachers over the 2018/19 academic year. We have also included references, where relevant, to data we collected as part of a research project called the 'Perceptions Project' that we carried out with funding from the Vodafone Foundation in April and May 2019.

Our lives and the lives of our children are so intricately digitally intertwined that we must focus on quality time spent online (versus quantity) and quality time listening/engaging with our kids about their digital lives. Defining screen time is now such a grey area. Online you can be doing homework, researching topics of interest/curiosity, reading with your kindle, listening to music, creating videos, taking photos, watching YouTube tutorials, gaming and chatting with friends. The focus must be on balance. The focus must be on quality. The key to raising digital citizens is open honest communication and education.

CyberSafelreland is committed to its vision of a world in which children are using technology in a safe, positive and successful manner and it has now completed the first year of a three-year strategy; we have made great strides towards achieving what we set out to achieve, as we will outline during the course of this report. We still have a lot of work to do in 2019 and 2020 and we encourage investors to continue to support CyberSafelreland in helping us deliver education to every child and parent across Ireland.

This year we have focused on the strengthening and broadening the Education Programme through the expansion of our panel of trainers, bringing the total number to 7, who are dispersed across Leinster and Munster. All of our trainers are expertly trained and garda-vetted. Other key achievements for the period include the launch of a new parental resource for our Safer Internet day campaign in February 2018 with the support of Tusla and the Children and Young Person's Services Committee (CYPSC) in Wicklow, which focused on the important conversations that parents need to be having with their children.

Too often children report to us that they are not talking about what they're doing online with their parents and this remains a fundamental strategy in both protecting and empowering kids online. We also launched a new 3rd class session in September 2018 with a view to building awareness amongst children as they embark on their online journeys. In addition, we developed a set of resources for parents of younger children (2 – 8) in order to help start off the thinking, the engagement and the conversations at this stage, when it is

so much easier to do so. This important work was funded by the Community Foundation.

From a Governance perspective, we went through the process of adhering to 'Statement of Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public' and we have formally discussed and adopted the Guidelines at a board meeting in 2018. We confirm our commitment to the principles set out in the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

In addition, we went through a re-branding exercise and launched a new website in October, with the support of Permanent TSB. We are so grateful for their ongoing support. The new website provides much easier navigation and is jam-packed with new resources so do check it out if you haven't yet had the chance.

CyberSafelreland was invited to join the newly set-up National Advisory Council on Online Safety, which was established following the launch of the new Action Plan on Online Safety in July. The organisation was also delighted to win two prestigious awards in 2018 including the Ireland Funds Flagship Award in September 2018 as well as one of three 'Impact Partnerships' of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland at their Awards ceremony in October.

On a final note, I would like to thank all of those who have supported us so tirelessly over the past year. We really could not have achieved what we did without this support. I would like to extend particular thanks to our funders and major supporters, including Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Trend Micro, the Ireland Funds, the Community Foundation and PTSB as well as those generous individuals who donated amounts, both big and small. I would also like to thank our small but dedicated team of volunteer "cyberninjas" led by the wonderful Michelle Garrigan. In 2018, our team increased to 7 and they have provided excellent research throughout this period. Their work enables our programme team to stay up-to-date and in tune with what children are doing and is quite frankly, invaluable.

I also want to thank our staff and trainers, without whom, we wouldn't be able to achieve what we do. We are delighted to welcome 5 new trainers into the team: Ann Harte, Aoife Boyle, Brendan Noone, Clíodhna Purdue and Martyn Wallace. I would also like to make special mention of Cliona Curley, who announced this year that she would be taking a



step back towards the end of 2019 in order to pursue a PhD in online extremism. Cliona is a founding member and has been instrumental in setting-up the organisation and establishing our Education Programme. We are delighted that she will remain on in an advisory capacity and wish her all the best with her future studies.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge my fellow board members who give up their time to meet four times a year and who offer their expertise and support throughout the year.

We have achieved so much in 2018 but as I write this midway through 2019, I know it will be a busy year ahead too. Please help us in our mission to protect and empower all children to be stronger, smarter and safer online!



Avril Ronan Naughton | Chairperson

DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

The directors present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of CyberSafeIreland Company Limited by Guarantee present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 December 2018.

The charity is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

The charity is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

Objectives

The charity's main object is to advance, promote and provide education and training to children, parents and teachers in the community to ensure safe and responsible navigation of the online world.

The following objects support the attainment of the main object.

- A** To engage in research and development and to organise, promote and provide training and development through seminars, conferences, discussions and other meetings to promote the main object.
- B** To make, print, publish, computerise, distribute training materials or general information in connection with the main object.
- C** Sharing safe and responsible online practice to enrich the education of children, parents and teachers in furtherance of the main object.
- D** Work directly with parents, schools, children and other persons as may be required to build a strong framework for high standards in furtherance of the main object.

The main area of the company's activity in 2018 were as follows:

We launched our new 3-year strategy in January 2018 with the following objectives:

- Strategic Outcome: Over the next three years CyberSafelreland will have heightened the awareness of 500,000 families in Ireland about the simple steps they can take to ensure that children are stronger, smarter and safer online.
- Specific Objectives:
 - Provide online resources for at least 500 schools in the form of a 'Resource Toolkit' for teachers and our 'Simple Steps' content for parents.
 - Mobilise at least 5,000 parents through direct delivery of online safety education sessions.
 - Raise awareness of at least 500,000 parents through the National Awareness Campaign.
 - Educate at least 20,000 children with the knowledge to have safer, healthier and more positive online experiences.
 - Build strategic partnerships with other organisations in order to increase our reach and impact.
 - Advocate for greater leadership and for a national strategic plan for online safety in Ireland.

Our Volunteers

The trustees are very grateful to the unpaid volunteers who have supported the organisation over the past year. Particular thanks and recognition must be extended to the diligent team of 'CyberNinja' volunteers led by Michelle Garrigan who provide technical research and who help us to keep on top of the constantly changing landscape of what kids are doing online. These people are always working away in the background, ensuring that CyberSafelreland staff and trainers stay up to speed on the latest apps, games and YouTubers. Special thanks also to Ben Ó Mathúin, who has provided fantastic support on digital media and to Niall Costello who made a huge contribution to our team during his summer internship throughout July and August.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding one Euro (€1).

The charity was established under a Constitution which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Constitution and managed by a Board of Directors.

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Governance

The charity has 8 trustees who meet on a quarterly basis and are responsible for the strategic direction of the charity. The charity is ran on a day to day basis by the chief executive officer, who is responsible for ensuring that the charity meets its long and short term aims and that the day to day operations run smoothly. The CEO and Programme Director delegated authority, within terms of delegation approved by the trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment and programme development.

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Management

There is clear division of responsibility at the company with the Board retaining control over major decisions. The board of directors retain overall responsibility for the strategic development of the company in close liaison with the executive officers. All directors have signed the charity's Code of Conduct as well as the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Directors are unpaid and no director received any payment during this period.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

The main achievements of the company during the year were:

- The main focus of the organisation is on the delivery of educational programmes, tools and resources to children, parents and teachers. To that end, we delivered educational sessions to 6,500 children aged between 8 and 13 in 52 schools across Leinster.
- Information and awareness raising sessions were provided to over 2,000 parents
- CyberSafelreland's third annual report was published in September and included a review of data gathered over the preceding academic year, based on responses from over 5,000 children.
- We reported to two Joint Oireachtas Committees (Education and Skills; Communication, Climate Action and the Environment) on areas related to online safety during this period.
- The organisation was appointed to the National Advisory Council on Online Safety (NACOS) in September.
- CyberSafelreland presented at a number of conferences throughout this period including IRISCON, delivered the keynote at the Children's Research Network annual conference, also at the Enactus Society meeting in UCC, the GAA conference for Child Protection Officers and the NTMA Annual dinner
- New resources were launched for Safer Internet Day 2018 and also Anti-bullying week in November.
- CyberSafelreland also undertook a re-branding exercise and launched a new website with the support of Permanent TSB, which will enable better navigation around our site and a more professional look and feel.
- Grants and additional support were secured from the Ireland Funds Flagship Award and the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Impact Partnership Programme have enabled CyberSafelreland to expand the team of staff and trainers for 2019.

Financial Review

Against the backdrop of limited resources and insecurities over funding, it has continued to be challenging to plan or develop services. Nevertheless the charity, with the aid of sound financial management and the support of both its staff and volunteers generated a very positive financial outcome for the period.

At the end of the year the charity has assets of €91,101 (2017 - €22,764) and liabilities of €3,077 (2017 - €4,093). The principal sources of funding for the charity are philanthropic grants and fees generated through services. Philanthropic grants were secured from Trend Micro, the Community Foundation, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and the Ireland Funds Flagship Awards.

Financial Results

At the end of the year the charity has assets of €91,101 (2017 - €22,764) and liabilities of €3,077 (2017 - €4,093). The net assets of the charity have increased by €69,353.

Reserves Position and Policy

The charity does not yet have a Reserves policy in place but this will be developed in 2019.

The charity needs reserves to:

- Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable service to those who need them.
- Meet contractual obligations as they fall due;
- Meet unexpected costs;
- Provide working capital when funding is paid in arrears;
- Meet the costs of winding up in the event that was necessary
- Be adequate to cover 3 months of current expenditure.

The total restricted funds at year end are €52,664, which are not included in the trustee's view of the charity's reserve needs because these restricted funds are held by the charity only for as long as is necessary to organise the necessary programmes. Normally these funds are spent within 12 months of receipt.

The directors are not expecting to make any significant changes in the nature of the business in the near future.

Reference and Administrative details

The organisation is a charitable company with a registered office at 93 Upper Georges Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The Charity trades under the name CyberSafelreland. The companies registered number is 568651.

The charity has been granted charitable tax status under Sections 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, Charity No CHY 21711 and is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority with the charity number 20104108. The charity has a total of 8 trustees.

The CEO is Ms. Alex Cooney who has over 15 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector. The day to day management of the charity is also directed by the following:

Programme Director: Ms. Cliona Curley who has extensive experience as a cybercrime investigator and analyst as well in the delivery of education programmes.

Directors and Secretary

The directors who served throughout the year, except as noted, were as follows:

- Ms. Ursula McMahon
- Prof. Joseph Carthy
- Prof. Brian O'Neill
- Ms. Avril Naughton
- Mr. John Fitzsimons
- Ms. Fiona Conway
- Ms. Derval Blehein
- Mr. Michael Moran

In accordance with the Constitution, the directors retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretary who served throughout the year was Ms. Ursula McMahon.

Compliance with Sector-wide Legislation and Standards

The charity engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. CyberSafelreland Company Limited by Guarantee subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2014
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

Future Developments

The directors are not expecting to make any significant changes in the nature of the business in the near future.

Auditors

The auditors, Veldon Tait, have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 380 of the Companies Act 2014.

Statement on Relevant Audit Information

There is no relevant audit information of which the statutory auditors are unaware. The directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and they have established that the statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Accounting Records

To ensure that adequate accounting records are kept in accordance with Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, the directors have employed appropriately qualified accounting personnel and have maintained appropriate computerised accounting systems. The accounting records are located at the company's office at 93 Upper George's Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10 April 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms. Ursula McMahon
Director



Prof. Joseph Carthy
Director

DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the charity as at the financial year end date and of the net income or expenditure of the charity for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2015);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the charity keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the charity, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and net income or expenditure of the charity to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and the Directors' Annual Report comply with Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the Republic of Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10 April 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms. Ursula McMahon | Director



Prof. Joseph Carthy | Director

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the charity financial statements of CyberSafelreland Company Limited by Guarantee for the year ended 31 December 2018 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet and the related notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the the charity as at 31 December 2018 and of its net incoming resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" as applied in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2014 and having regard to the Charities SORP; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditor's Report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the Directors' Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the charity were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited. The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the Directors' Annual Report. The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement set out on page the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to the going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the the charity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Further information regarding the scope of our responsibilities as auditor

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the , whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may

involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditor's Report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditor's Report. However, future events or conditions may cause the the charity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume any responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Keith Murphy
for and on behalf of

VELDON TAIT Statutory auditor

4 Clarinda Park North, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

10 April 2019

TEACHER TESTIMONIAL

"Brilliant to have someone with expertise on the subject talk to the boys about being safe online. I thought I was young enough to have a fair idea but it was like another language"

TEACHER, ST. PIUS X, DUBLIN

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

for the year ended 31 December 2018.

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2018	Restricted Funds 2018	Total 2018	Unrestricted Funds 2017	Restricted Funds 2017	Total 2017
Incoming Resources							
Voluntary Income	3.1	€36,199	-	€36,199	€7,385	-	€7,385
Charitable Activities							
Grants from governments and other co-funders	3.2	€70,961	€56,000	€126,961	€63,470	€19,420	€82,890
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		€107,160	€56,000	€163,160	€70,855	€19,420	€90,275
Resources Expended							
Charitable activities	4.1	€79,489	€14,318	€93,807	€63,695	€34,783	€98,478
Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers		€27,671	€41,682	€69,353	€7,160	(€15,363)	(€8,203)
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR		€27,671	€41,682	€69,353	€7,160	(€15,363)	(€8,203)
Reconciliation of Funds							
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2018	10	€7,689	€10,982	€18,671	€529	€26,345	€26,874
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER 2018		€35,360	€52,664	€88,024	€7,689	€10,982	€18,671

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10 April 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms. Ursula McMahon | Director



Prof. Joseph Carthy | Director

BALANCE SHEET

		2018	2017
Current Assets	Notes		
Debtors	8	€13,406	€250
Cash and cash equivalents		€77,695	€22,514
		€91,101	€22,764
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	9	(€3,077)	(€4,093)
Net Current Assets		€88,024	€18,671
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		€88,024	€18,671
Funds			
Restricted funds		€52,664	€10,982
General fund (unrestricted)		€35,360	€7,689
TOTAL FUNDS	10	€88,024	€18,671

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10 April 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms. Ursula McMahon | Director



Prof. Joseph Carthy | Director

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1 | GENERAL INFORMATION

CyberSafeIreland Company Limited by Guarantee is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in the Republic of Ireland. The registered office of the company is 93 Upper George's Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, which is also the principal place of business of the company. The CRO number is 568651. The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the company.

2 | ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charity's financial statements.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) and with generally accepted accounting principles in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014. They comply with the financial reporting standards

of the Accounting Standards Board, as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charitable company's financial statements.

Cash flow statement

The charity has availed of the exemption in FRS 102 from the requirement to produce a cash flow statement because it is classified as a small charity.

Incoming Resources

Voluntary income or capital is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to it, its financial value can be quantified with reasonable certainty and there is reasonable certainty of its ultimate receipt. Income received in advance of due performance under a contract is accounted for as deferred income until earned. Grants for activities are recognised as income when the related conditions for legal entitlement have been met. All other income is accounted for on an accruals basis.

Resources Expended

All resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Charitable activities include costs of services and grants, support costs and depreciation on related assets. Costs of generating funds similarly include fundraising activities. Non-staff costs not attributed to one category of activity are allocated or apportioned pro-rata to the staffing of the relevant service. Finance, HR, IT and administrative staff costs are directly attributable to individual activities by objective. Governance costs are those associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Trade and other debtors

Trade and other debtors are initially recognised at fair value and thereafter stated at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment losses for bad and doubtful debts except where the effect of discounting would be immaterial. In such cases the receivables are stated at cost less impairment losses for bad and doubtful debts.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand, demand deposits with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less and bank overdrafts. In the balance sheet bank overdrafts are shown within creditors.

Trade and other creditors

Trade and other creditors are initially recognised at fair value and thereafter stated at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, unless the effect of discounting would be immaterial, in which case they are stated at cost.

Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Income recognised by the the charity from government agencies and other co-funders, but not yet received at year end, is included in debtors.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand comprises cash on deposit at banks requiring less than three months notice of withdrawal.

Taxation

No current or deferred taxation arises as the charity has been granted charitable exemption. Irrecoverable valued added tax is expensed as incurred.

The company is exempt from Corporation Tax as it is a registered charity with a registered charity number 20104108.

3 | INCOME

3.1 DONATIONS AND LEGACIES	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2018	2017
Donations	€36,199	-	€36,199	€7,385

3.2 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2018	2017
Services	€53,961	-	€53,961	€39,182
Grants	€17,000	€56,000	€73,000	€43,708
	€70,961	€56,000	€126,961	€82,890

4 | EXPENDITURE

4.1 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Direct Costs	Other Costs	Support Costs	2018	2017
Delivery of services	€50,414	-	€40,111	€90,525	€96,026
Governance Costs (Note 4.2)	-	-	€3,282	€3,282	€2,452
	€50,414	-	€43,393	€93,807	€98,478

4.2 GOVERNANCE COSTS	Direct Costs	Other Costs	Support	2018	2017
Charitable activities - governance costs	-	-	€3,282	€3,282	€2,452

4.3 SUPPORT COSTS	Charitable Activities	Governance Costs	2018	2017
Salaries,wages and related costs	€27,622	-	€27,622	€33,428
General office	€12,489	-	€12,489	€4,143
Audit and accounting fees	-	€3,282	€3,282	€2,452
	€40,111	€3,282	€43,393	€40,023

5 | ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Basis of Apportionment	2018	2017
Salaries,wages and related costs	Time	€27,622	€33,428
General office	Support	€12,489	€4,143
Audit and accounting fees		€3,282	€2,452
		€43,393	€40,023

6 | EMPLOYEES AND REMUNERATION

Number of employees

The average number of persons employed (including executive directors) during the year was as follows:

	2018 Number	2017 Number
Administration	1	1
Training	1	1
	2	2
The staff costs comprise:	2018	2017
Wages and salaries	€49,837	€62,400
Social security costs	€5,407	€6,708
	€55,244	€69,108

7 | EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION

There are no employees who received employee benefits of more than €70,000 for the reporting period.

8 | DEBTORS

	2018	2017
Trade debtors	€13,406	€250

9 | CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year	2018	2017
Taxation and social security costs	-	€1,266
Other creditors	€1,327	€1,327
Accruals	€1,750	€1,500
	€3,077	€4,093

10 | FUNDS

10.1 RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
At 1 January 2017	€529	€26,345	€26,874
Movement during the financial year	€7,160	(€15,363)	(€8,203)
At 31 December 2017	€7,689	€10,982	€18,671
Movement during the financial year	€27,671	€41,682	€69,353
At 31 December 2018	€35,360	€52,664	€88,024

10.2 ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS ON FUNDS					
	Balance 1 January 2018	Income	Expenditure	Transfers between funds	Balance 31 December 2018
Restricted income					
Restricted Funds	€10,982	€56,000	(€14,318)	-	€52,664
Total funds	€10,982	€56,000	€14,318	-	€52,664

10.3 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND	Current assets	Current liabilities	Total
Restricted funds	€52,664	-	€52,664
Unrestricted general funds	€38,437	(€3,077)	€35,360
	€91,101	(€3,077)	€88,024

11 | STATUS

The charity is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

The liability of the members is limited.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members, or within one year thereafter, for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members, and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves, such amount as may be required, not exceeding € 1.

12 | POST-BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There have been no significant events affecting the Charity since the year-end.

13 | APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 10 April 2019.

CYBERSAFEIRELAND'S ACADEMIC YEAR IN REVIEW 2018 – 2019

Overview

In this part of the report, we provide an overview of the data we have collected over the past academic year (September 2018 – June 2019) and also a more in-depth focus on some of the key findings. The data is gathered from children via an anonymous online survey before we go into each school. This allows us to get a picture of trends and usage within the classroom and also to tailor the session more specifically to their needs. In addition, we use the report as a basis for reporting back to parents, in general terms, about what their children are doing online. Where appropriate and of interest, we have also provided a comparative analysis of the data against last year's data. We have also pulled out figures from schools in lower socio-economic status areas to identify trends within this particular group and in order to compare with overall findings. We have also included some of the findings from a piece of research we conducted with funding from the Vodafone Foundation. Finally, there is some data and testimonials collected from parents and teachers following the sessions.

Key Numbers

- Since January 2016, we have spoken to almost **17,500 children aged between 8 and 13**.
- In this academic year we spoke directly to **4,373 children** and to **1,261 parents**.
- We visited 35 schools and childcare facilities over the academic year and over a third (34%) required at least one additional day because of large numbers.
- We have gathered data from **3,867 children** through our anonymous online survey, 48% of which were male (1,845) and 52% were female (2,022).
- A breakdown of ages is provided in Table 1 below:

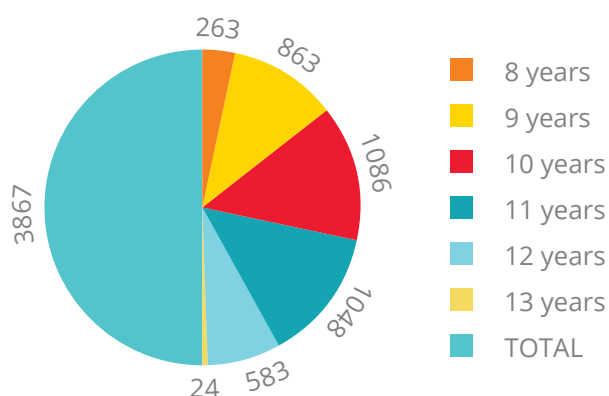


TABLE 1

Children who own a smart device

In the previous academic year (2017/18), we focused on children who owned a smartphone specifically but this year we thought it would be interesting to get a view on ownership of smart devices in general. We have noticed in media commentary, a focus on smart phones in particular and our concern is that this focus detracts from the full picture. Whilst smartphones are among the most portable of devices, there are a range of other devices that children use to connect to the Internet, including tablets, games consoles, iPod Touches and laptops. Some of these devices are portable, particularly the iPod Touch, mini tablets and some games consoles. There is a danger with a focus on smartphones in particular that parents overlook the other devices that their children own. Some parents tell us that they've "held off" on the smartphone but when probed further, it turns out that their child has other devices. All the smart devices highlighted above can be used to access social media and gaming platforms, and for other online activities.

The figures outlined below indicate that ownership of smart devices for the 8 – 13 age-group is high. As Table 2 below shows, overall **92% of the children surveyed state that they own a smart device**. Ownership rises incrementally with age, starting at 83% of 8 year olds and rising to 98% of 12 year olds. **This suggests that a very small proportion of children in this age category do not own any smart device at all.** The slight drop-off to 92% at 13 can likely be attributed to the sample size for this group which is very small (24 out of 3,867 children overall) and therefore not representative of this age-group in general. The most popular devices are tablets (56%) and games consoles (52%) with smartphones being the third most popular (42%).

Ownership of smart devices by age

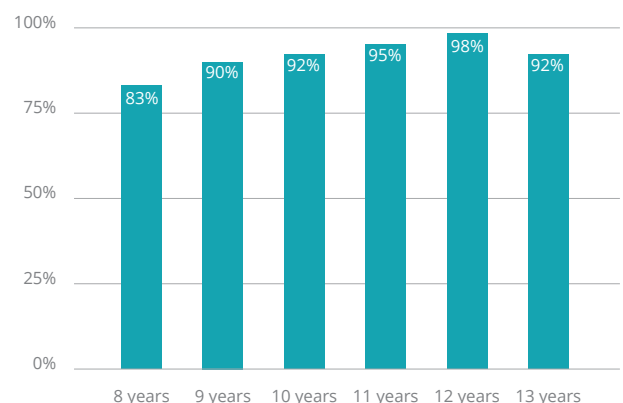


TABLE 2

Overall there were no significant gender deviations, as illustrated in Table 3 with the exception of games consoles where there was a dramatic difference with 77% of boys vs. only 29% of girls owning one. This tallies with other research we conducted recently where we found that significantly more boys put gaming as one of their favourite online pastimes (59%) than girls (30%).¹

Ownership of smart devices by gender

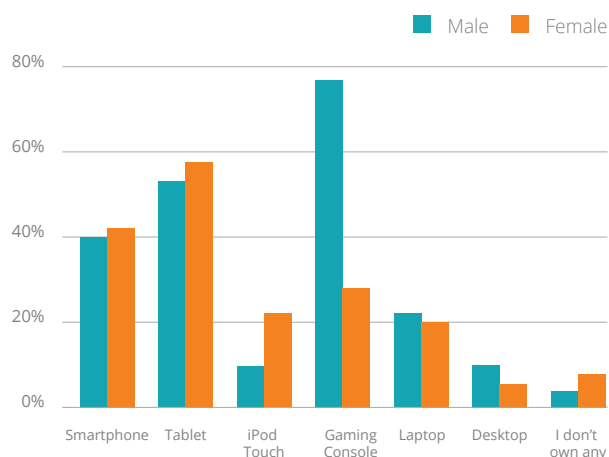


TABLE 3

We are often asked what the right age is to give children a smartphone. As outlined above, this question should focus on buying ANY smart device not just smartphones. To illustrate this point, nearly half (43%) of the children we surveyed that own a tablet (but not a smartphone) are on social media and messaging apps. The reality is that the age at which you give a child any smart device should depend on the maturity levels of the child in question and the availability of the parent to be involved and engaged in their child's use of the device. We advise parents in our parents' talks to hold off for as long as they can on giving their children their own device. **Children who own their own smart device are much more likely to be on social media and messaging apps:** 67% of smart device owners are on social media or messaging apps as compared to only 24% of those who don't own one.

At whatever age a parent decides to give their child a smart device, this should be an informed decision, and not resulting solely from significant pressure from their child and their peers. If a parent is unsure, a helpful strategy in withstanding this pressure is to build a community of support around them by reaching out to other parents in their child's peer group and trying to agree on issues such as, when is the right time, what apps and games they can use etc. It's much easier to say 'no' or 'not yet' or 'only under these conditions' if you know that other parents in your child's peer group are doing the same.

Use of Social Media & Messaging Apps

Our data shows that 60% of the children we surveyed are using social media and messaging apps and 40% are not. More girls (65%) are using social media than boys (55%). In the survey we ask them to tick a box if they are not using any social media and messaging applications and if they are, to state what apps they are using. The most interesting finding versus last year's data, is that there appears to be somewhat lower usage. Last year it was 70% of children in the 8 – 13 age category. **One contributing factor in this reduction could be that there were higher levels of public debate on this issue in 2018 compared to previous years as a result of the Digital Age of Consent**, which came in to effect as part of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Anecdotally, we have witnessed greater awareness among parents at our talks that there is a minimum age of 13 on social media apps such as Snapchat since the debate of the age of Digital Consent began.

Interestingly the Digital Age of Consent was not so much about usage as children's data rights. It defines the age under which children require parental consent to sign up to online services, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, or online gaming platforms on the basis that those services cannot collect data on children under that age. After considerable debate, the Government set the Digital Age of Consent at 16 in Ireland. The reality is that not much has changed in practice with regards to sign-up procedures and age verification measures on the part of the most popular online service providers since the introduction of GDPR - the new measures are not prohibitive to an under-age child wishing to access online services.²

The issue however, generated a huge amount of debate in the general public and in the media, which centred not just on children's data rights but on whether children should be accessing these services at all. It also occasionally veered onto the age at which they should be allowed smartphones. Whilst the central issue of protecting children's data may not have been resolved by the introduction of the Digital Age of Consent, the public debate may well have contributed to a reduction in under-age usage of online services in some cases as a result of increased awareness on the part of parents of preteens that social media apps had a minimum age limit of at least 13.

¹ This data is from the research carried out for the 'Perceptions Project' with funding from the Vodafone Foundation in April 2019. We surveyed 425 children aged 8 – 13 and held 4 focus group discussions involving 25 children aged 8 – 12 across 2 schools.

² CyberSafelreland commissioned some research in May 2019 (one year on from the introduction of the Digital Age of Consent), which was carried out by two researchers at UCD, and this found very little had changed in practice.

It is likely children in general are now more vulnerable online however, as a greater proportion of them are incentivised to lie about their age to avoid additional GDPR constraints for 13-16 year olds. As a result, any protections around their data or safety that social media companies have put in place will not be applied. The digital age of consent public debate supports our view that public awareness campaigns targeting parents in particular, will support them in making informed choices for their children, especially when they are under 13.

Whilst there is an overall reduction, the breakdown provided in Table 4 illustrates that **there are still high numbers of under-age children accessing online services, despite minimum age restrictions of at least 13**. This starts at 48% of 8 year olds, with a slight drop-off to 45% of 9 year olds and then a steady increase from age 10 (55%) up to 13 (96%).

Use of social media & messaging apps by age

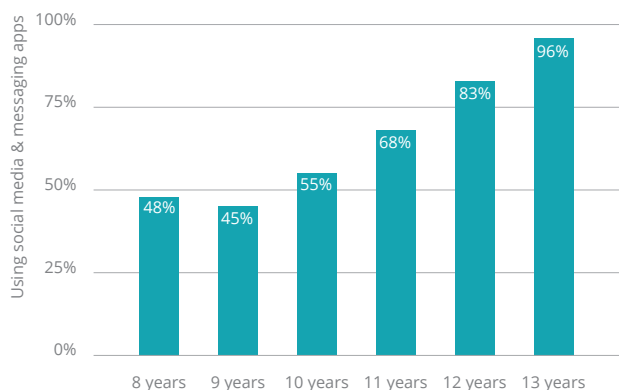


TABLE 4

As noted earlier, the minimum age on all of the most popular social media and messaging apps is 13, with the exception of WhatsApp, which is 16. Whilst the minimum age is clear at the point of sign-up on some of these apps, including on Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok, on others such as WhatsApp, Messenger and Discord, it is not. This latter group do not even ask for an age at sign-up at all, though they do state the age restrictions in their T&Cs.

Those services that do ask for a birth date will refuse to allow an under-age user to sign up (a warning box will appear). But there is nothing to stop the same user trying again with an older age.

In a nod to GDPR, some services have additional conditions for children aged 13 – 16:

- Snapchat notes that it may limit how they store and use data for this age group.
- Instagram suggests asking for parental authorisation. A child can skip this last step, however, and can also enter false dates because there is no age verification. The age that they enter appears to impact what ads will be shown for 13 – 16 year olds.
- Viber allows children aged 13-16 to use its services, but states that it is with greater control and protection.
- Skype asks for an email address of a parent if a child enters an age less than 16.
- Any teenager over the age of 13 can register and use Facebook but to view any content, it is necessary to get parental authorisation, either via their Facebook page or by email.

It's worth noting that a child could set up an email account for the purpose of bypassing the requirements for parental consent for either of the latter two apps. Or just changing their age 16 to bypass the need for parental consent completely.

The ten most popular apps with the 8 – 13 year olds are listed in Table 5 below in order of their popularity. Snapchat is the most popular app again this year (and has been for the past 4 years) with 33% of children using it. It is most popular with 11- (40%), 12- (54%) and 13 year olds (83%). WhatsApp is the second most popular app with this age group with 28% of children using it. Instagram has slightly decreased in popularity with this age group this year with 23% of children using it. TikTok (formerly known as Musical.ly) remains steady at 21% and is the 4th most popular app with 8 – 13 year olds. To reiterate, all of the online services in this group have a minimum age restriction of 13, with the exception of WhatsApp, which has an age restriction of 16, as laid out in their terms and conditions.

Top ten apps for 8 - 13 year old children

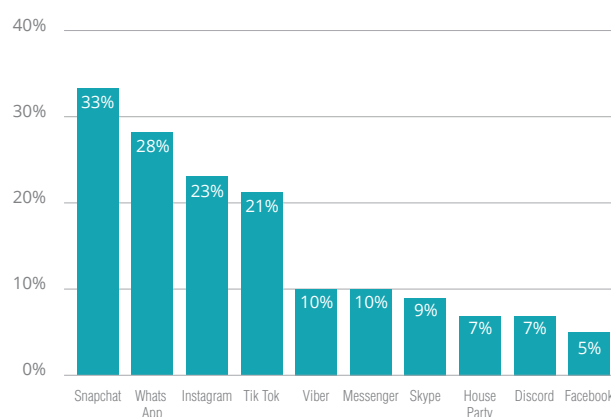


TABLE 5

Time Spent Online Daily

In our survey we asked children to indicate how much time they spend online every day and the results in Table 6 show that the majority of children were spending 0 – 1 hours a day (33%) and 1 – 2 hours online every day (31%), although this trend decreases as the age increases. 17% of children are spending 2 – 4 hours online every day and **a small but worrying proportion (12%) are online for more than 4 hours a day**. This figure tallies with our findings in 2017/18. It is particularly high for children aged 13 (33%) but this is an overall small sample of children. Table 7 illustrates that in general boys are spending more time online than girls with 9% of girls spending 4+ hours online vs. 15% boys.

Time spent online every day by age

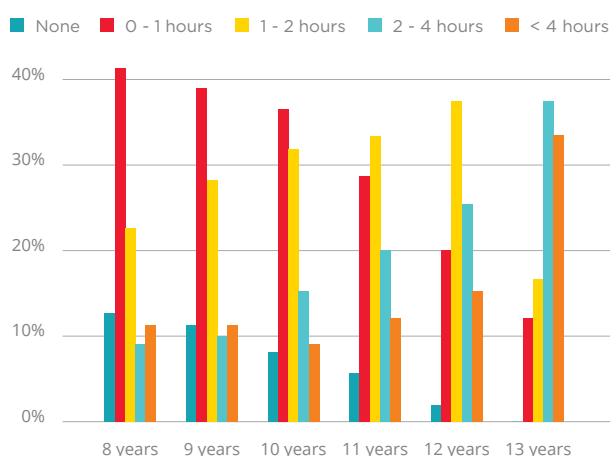


TABLE 6

3 The health impacts of screen time: a guide for clinicians and parents, UK Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (January 2019).

4 'W.H.O. Says Limited or No Screen Time for Children Under 5' (April 2019), By Emily S. Rueb, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/24/health/screen-time-.html>

Time spent online every day by gender

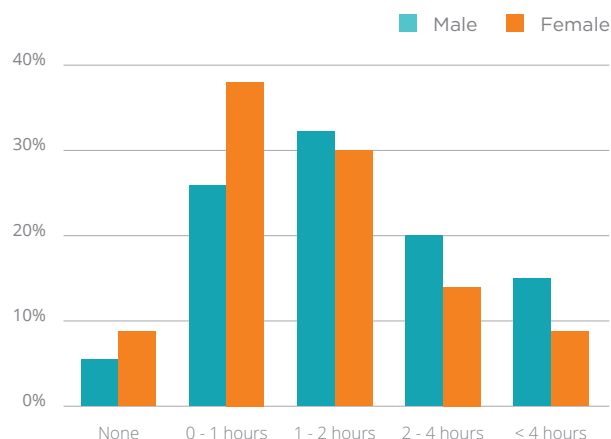


TABLE 7

We are frequently asked to give a view on what the “right” amount of screen time is for children. In our view, it is important to consider **what** they are doing online over how long they are spending online (quality over quantity) although clearly time limits and boundaries are also needed. It is also important to consider if screen time is replacing other activities required for a healthy balanced lifestyle. The UK Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)³ published guidelines on this in January 2019, which acknowledge that every family is different but also offer helpful guidance to assess how healthy screen time is for each family based on four key questions:

- 1 Is screen time controlled?
- 2 Does screen use interfere with what your family want to do?
- 3 Does screen use interfere with sleep?
- 4 Are you able to control snacking during screen time?

In April 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued further guidelines around screen time, which go further than the American Association of Paediatrics (AAP) 2016 guidelines. They include recommending no sedentary screen time for children under the age of 2, with sedentary screen time for 2-4 year olds recommended to be limited to no more than 1 hour a day.⁴

Talking to Strangers

In our survey we ask children how often they chat with someone online that they have never met in real life. Most children (57%) responded that they never speak to strangers online but a significant minority do. Table 8 below indicates that **43% of children overall are talking to people that they don't know in real life online in some capacity**; 16% speak to strangers at least once a week and 17% speak to them every day. About one fifth of children aged 8 – 10 are speaking to strangers every day and a quarter of 12 year olds. These figures are slightly higher than our findings for 2017/18.

Frequency of 8 - 13 year olds chatting to strangers online

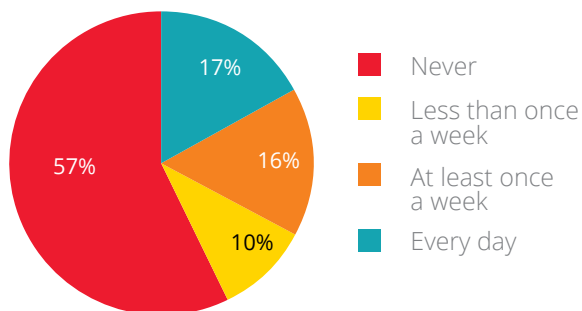


TABLE 8

It is noteworthy that **24% of 8 and 28% of 9 year olds are talking to someone they don't know either every day or at least once a week**. This rises to 30% of 10 year olds, 38% of 11 year olds and 42% of 12 year olds (see Table 9).

Chatting to strangers online by age

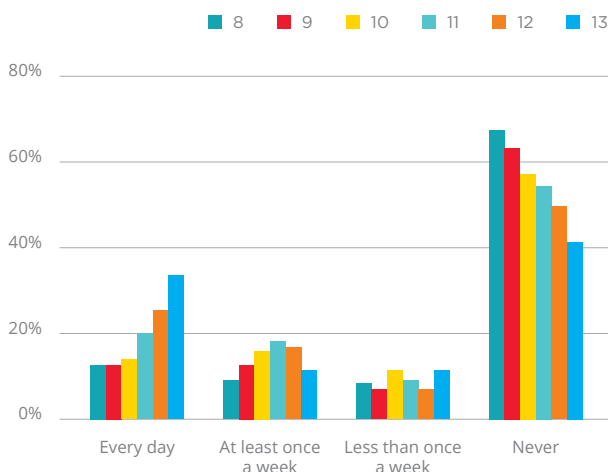


TABLE 9

In terms of gender deviations, Table 10 shows that **boys are much more likely to be speaking to strangers on a regular basis**, with 21% versus 13% of girls speaking to them every day and 20% of boys versus 12% of girls speaking to them at least once a week.

This difference could be due to a greater prevalence of gaming among boys. This is highlighted further if we disaggregate by age as well as gender: 33% of 8 year old boys and 49% of 9 year old boys are speaking to strangers in some capacity.

Chatting to stranger online by gender

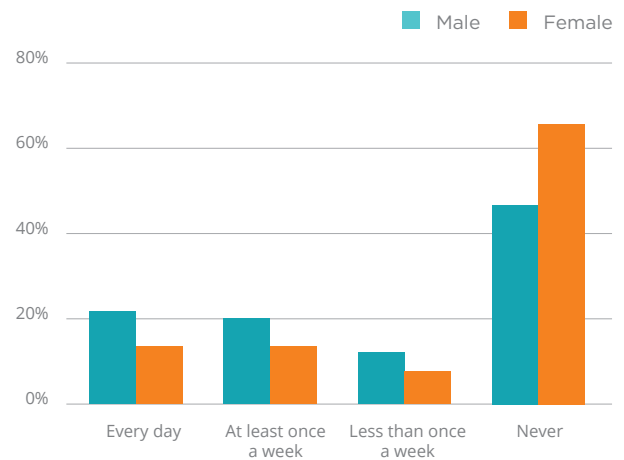


TABLE 10

It's important to point out that not every incidence of children talking to strangers is necessarily ominous but there remains a concern around children having contact with people online they don't know in real life. A number of high profile court cases from both Ireland and internationally have highlighted that the Internet offers many opportunities for people to meet and groom children online and that they will do so through popular online games and social media and messaging apps. It is incredibly important parents are keeping an eye on who their children are talking to online and discussing it with them on a regular basis, and especially when they are young.

In terms of the ways in which children are talking to strangers, we know from our conversations with them and also from our data that it is often through online games, many of which have a group chat facility and also through social media. We know from our data that **63% of those who are speaking to strangers everyday are also gaming and that 84% are also on social media and messaging apps**, so this helps us to understand more clearly in what capacity children may be in contact with strangers online.

When we break it down by gender, we find the following:

	Girls who speak to strangers everyday	Boys who speak to strangers everyday
Gaming	57%	67%
Social Media	94%	78%

We have found that whilst many children understand the concept of “stranger danger” when we talk about it in the classroom, they don’t always apply this knowledge to their online lives and as we noted in last year’s report, **many will value popularity over privacy**. A follower on a platform like YouTube, TikTok or Instagram or a group of people with whom are playing a game online may not always be viewed by them as “friends” in the conventional sense. This may help us understand to some extent why they don’t apply the “stranger danger” concept to all aspects of their online lives. Many children are influenced by their favourite YouTubers, who have amassed thousands or millions of followers (the vast majority of whom they won’t personally know). In addition, it has been reported that social media influencers and being a YouTuber are among the most popular career aspirations of children today.⁵

In our ‘Perceptions Project’ research, we explored this concept further with children. We asked them if it is safe to add someone that you don’t know in real life to your friends list on any app or game? The majority of children understood that the ‘stranger danger’ concept applies in the online world, with 75% of those surveyed agreeing that it is not safe to add someone you don’t know to your friends list (Table 11). However a minority (14%) said it was ok to do this ‘sometimes’, with kids being more comfortable to add strangers as they got older, i.e., 16% of 11 year olds and 16% of 12 year olds and 27% of 13 year olds versus 10% of 8 year olds. In one of the focus group discussions (FGDs) that we facilitated (with 8 - 12 year olds) as part of the research, we noted that over half of the group had friends or followers online that they didn’t know in real life. We can see from Table 12 that girls in general are more wary of strangers online than boys, 10% of boys think it is safe to add someone you don’t know compared to just 1% of girls; 10% of the girls and 20% of boys said it was safe to do so sometimes.

Is it safe to add someone that you don’t know in real life to your friends list on any app or game?

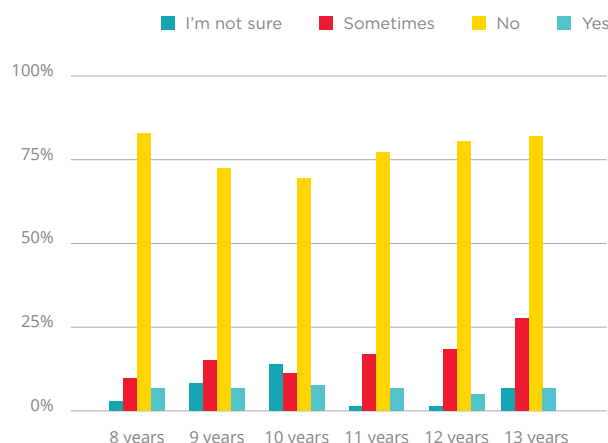


TABLE 11⁶

Is it safe to add someone that you don’t know in real life to your friends list on any app or game?

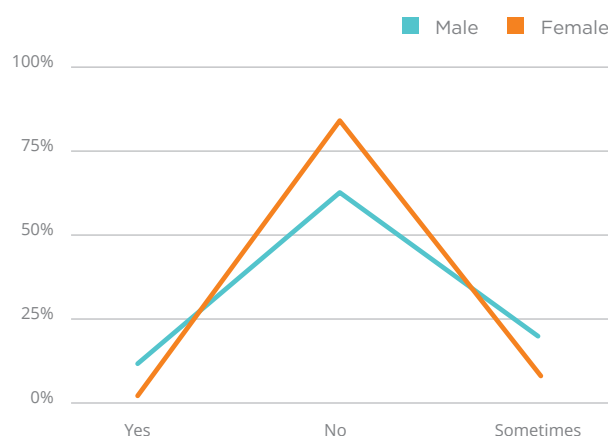


TABLE 12⁷

“a random person was texting me to meet in a certain place so I told my mum.”

BOY, AGE 9

“There is this person I don’t know and he always texts me from different accounts so I tell my mam.”

BOY, AGE 9

It was apparent from the discussions in one school in particular that it was relatively normal to receive friend requests from people they did not know in real life. Generally they knew not to accept them but a number of the children admitted that they did have people on their list of friends or followers who they didn’t know. Here is a selection of comments from the FGDs:

⁵ “Influencer’ now one of the most popular career aspirations among children’ (Jan 2019), Mobile Marketing Magazine Source: <https://mobilemarketingmagazine.com/social-media-influencer-youtuber-uk-children-career-aspirations-awin> and ‘Revealed: Top career aspirations for today’s primary school children’ (Jan 2018), The Telegraph, Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/01/19/revealed-top-career-aspirations-todays-primary-school-children/>

⁶ The ‘Perceptions Project’, April/May 2019.

⁷ Ibid.

Children on YouTube

In our survey we ask children if they have ever posted or appeared in a YouTube video and the results show that it remains a hugely popular platform with them both as consumers of YouTube content but also as creators of videos themselves. This tallies with findings from our 'Perceptions Project' research where we found that 32% put 'watching videos' as their favourite thing to do online (particularly girls with 42% putting 'watching videos' versus 17% of boys).⁸ Watching videos was particularly popular among the younger cohort of children that we surveyed.

Much of the content children are consuming online may well be harmless but it remains important that parents and carers are aware of what children are watching and what they are being exposed to online because we also know from our conversations with children that occasionally they are coming across content that bothers them in some way – on YouTube as well as across the Internet in general. Most kids (48%) that we surveyed as part of the 'Perceptions Project' reported that they hadn't come across such content but a sizeable portion answered 'yes' (35%) and 17% weren't sure. We encourage parents to use YouTube Kids for younger children (3 – 8 years) and to enable restrictions in the main platform in order to filter out what YouTube know to be adult content. We also encourage regular conversations about what children are seeing and doing online.

We also come across a significant number of children who upload videos on YouTube (22%) and who appear in videos themselves and show their face (26%) – see Table 13. The overall number who have appeared in a YouTube video is slightly increased from last year, which was 24%.

Children aged 8 - 13 who have posted or appeared in a YouTube video

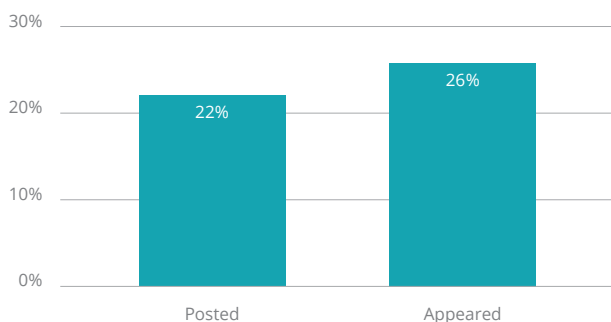


TABLE 13

Table 14 illustrates the number of respondents who do so, by age. From this table, we can see that 19% of 8 and 9 year olds post videos and 24% appear in videos and this steadily increases with age up to the age of 12, with 26% posting and 32% appearing in videos. A much higher proportion of 13 year olds post videos (38%) but this is a small sample number overall.

⁸ Ibid.

Children aged 8 - 13 who have posted or appeared in a YouTube video

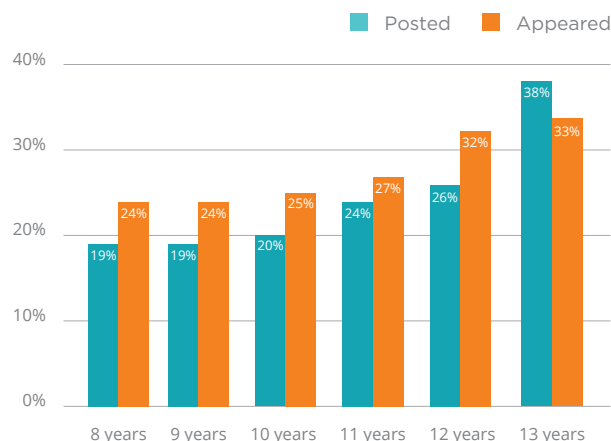


TABLE 14

Table 15 gives an overview of the gender breakdown and from it, it is clear that boys are much more likely to both post videos (29%) and appear in videos (31%) than girls, with 15% posting videos and 23% appearing in videos. This continues a trend that we saw last year.

Children aged 8 - 13 who have posted or appeared in a YouTube video by gender

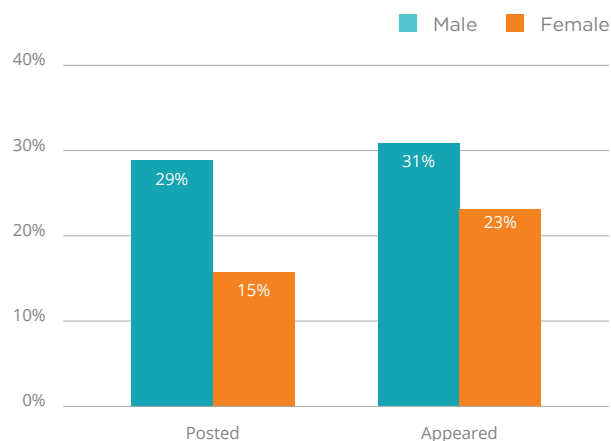


TABLE 15

Again, it is worth noting that YouTube has an age-restriction in place of 13 so none of these children should be posting videos on the platform.

In our classroom sessions, we talk to children about the importance of not sharing too much personal information and we advise against showing their faces in videos that are to be posted publicly online but as noted earlier, many children aspire to be the next YouTube sensation so it can be a challenging message to get across and needs to be discussed regularly both at home and in school. Children are often not using YouTube in a private way and are consequently exposed to a wide audience of people that they do not know in real life. There is also sometimes an issue with people posting mean comments on their videos.

Over-18s games

In the online survey, we ask children if they have ever played a game that has an age-rating of over 18. Table 16 below shows that the majority of children (56%) had not but 29% said 'yes' and 15% said they weren't sure.

Have played an over-18s game – 8 - 13 year olds

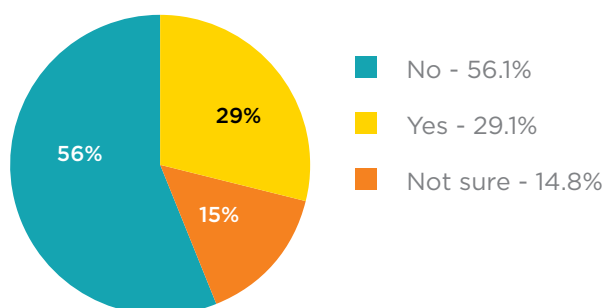


TABLE 16

Continuing a trend that we saw in last year's data, there is a very clear gender dimension to the results, with 47% of boys overall playing over-18s games compared to only 12% of girls (Table 17).

8 - 13 year olds who have played an over-18s game by gender

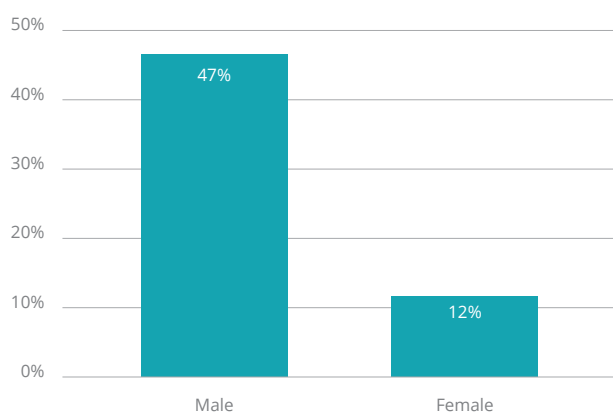


TABLE 17

Table 18 also shows a breakdown by age and gender and this illustrates the above trend more clearly **with 36% of 8 year old boys playing over-18s games and only 6% of 8 year old girls**. This trend continues with age with 66% of 12 year old boys playing over-18s games versus 16% of 12 year old girls.

Children aged 8 - 13 playing over-18s games by gender & age

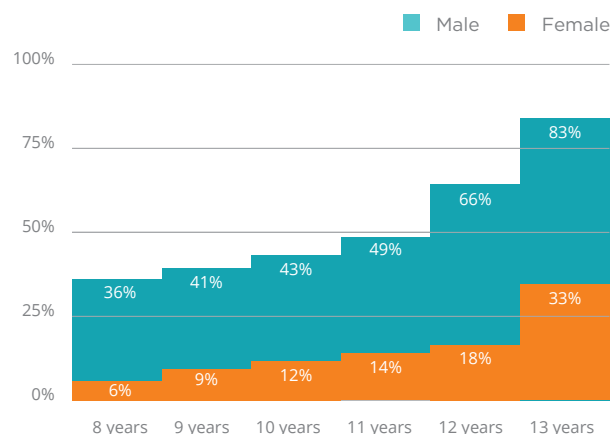


TABLE 18

The concern with children playing overage games is that that they will come across content that is not appropriate for a child; this content may well be of a sexual or violent nature as is the case with games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty. Table 19 below is taken from the 'Perceptions Project' and it provides an overview of what games children enjoy playing by gender.⁹ There is also a clear gender breakdown in terms of the types of games they enjoy playing with girls in general preferring Roblox and Minecraft and to a lesser degree, Fortnite and Subway Surfers. Significantly more boys were playing Fortnite and FIFA.

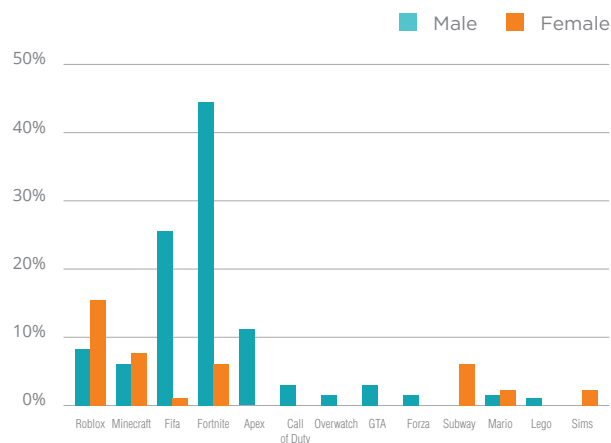


TABLE 19

Several academic studies support the claim that violent video games affect levels of aggression in adolescents as well as negatively impacting on their attitudes and behaviours.¹⁰ In addition, other studies have noted other negative factors including a delay of moral development in adolescents with high violent video game exposure.¹¹ These studies indicate

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gabbiadini, A., Riva, P., Andrighetto, L., Volpato, C., and Bushman, B. J. (2013). Interactive effect of moral disengagement and violent video games on self-control, cheating, and aggression. *Soc. Psychol. Pers. Sci.* 4, 451-458. Sziyez, D. M., and Baran, B. (2017). Determining reactive and proactive aggression and empathy levels of middle school students regarding their video game preferences. *Computers Hum. Behaviour* 72, 286-295. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.006

¹¹ Bajovic, 2013. Violent video gaming and moral reasoning in adolescents: is there an association? *Educ. Media Int.* 50, 177-191

that there is evidence for physical and psychological implications for adolescents who are exposed to violent games, especially for those with high levels of exposure.

It is important to note that these studies were carried out on adolescents. Our survey findings suggest that future research needs to include younger children as 36% of 8 year old boys are playing over 18 games. In addition to checking out PEGI ratings, we urge parents and carers to check out any game that their child wishes to play themselves. We have come across games that have age-ratings as low as 3 that have a chatroom facility. We would recommend checking out websites such as www.commonssensemedia.org for further information.

.....

Talking to Parents

Preparing a child for the online world is similar to many other aspects of parenting, whether it is preparing them to cross the road safely or to be aware of water safety or fire risk. The conversations we have with our children are a fundamental part of both the preparation but also the on-going guidance that children will need to become safe and smart online users. Establishing good communication with children, agreeing clear and consistent rules, and keeping an eye on what they are doing online are all fundamental strategies in keeping kids safe online but also empowering them to be smart online users themselves.

In our survey, we asked children when they had last talked to a parent or carer about staying safe online and gave them the options of ‘this week’, ‘this month’, ‘this year’, ‘more than a year ago’ or ‘never’. Table 20 shows that the majority of children had spoken to a parent or carer relatively recently and most had spoken to their parents this year (29%) or this month (24%). **A significant minority of 36% however, had rarely (more than a year ago) or never spoken to their parents about online safety and this was particularly notable for children aged 8 and 9 (45% and 39% respectively) – Table 21.**

This appears to improve with age, with 30% of 11 and 12 year olds rarely or never talking to their parents about online safety. This might lead to the assumption that parents get better at talking to their kids as they get older on the basis that they are more likely to be on social media and messaging apps at that stage. Our data suggests that this would be misleading as **37% of 9 year olds, for example, who have never spoken to their parents about online safety are in fact on social media & messaging apps,** which suggests that an important gap remains for those children.

When did you last talk to a parent or carer about staying safe online?

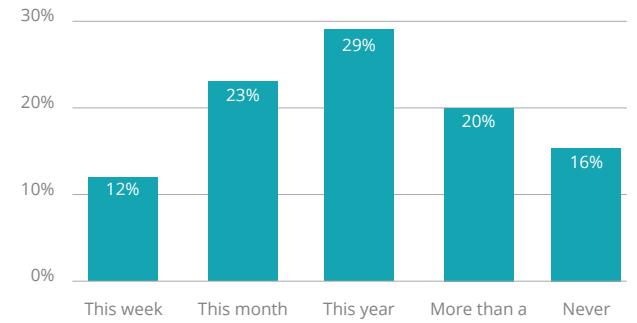


TABLE 20

Talking to parents about online safety by age

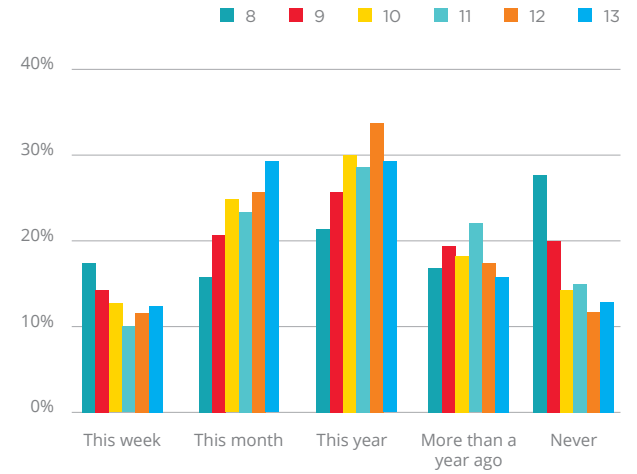


TABLE 21

There was a clear gender deviation on ‘never’ with 20% of boys and only 12% of girls giving this response (Table 22). Overall there is a significant increase of those children ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ speaking to their parents about online safety on last year, where it was only 30% overall. This is disappointing given the level of public dialogue on the issue over the past year and underpins the need for public awareness campaigns to support parents in having these vital conversations.

Talking to parents about online safety by gender

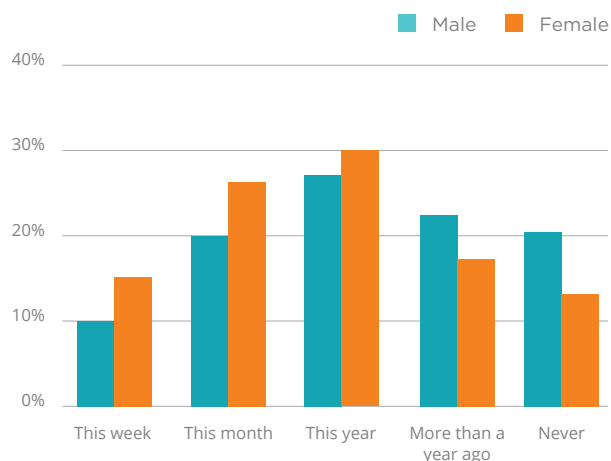


TABLE 22

In the 'Perceptions Project' research we explored with children in a bit more depth the extent to which parents were engaging with their children on the issue of online safety.¹² We asked them, for example, if there were any rules at home for going online (and they were allowed to tick any that applied). The majority of children do have rules in place **although a notable 14% of children responded that they had no rules**. This response appeared to be particularly high for 9 year olds (21%) and 13 year olds (18%) but only 7% for 11 year olds (Table 23).

Are there any rules at home for going online?

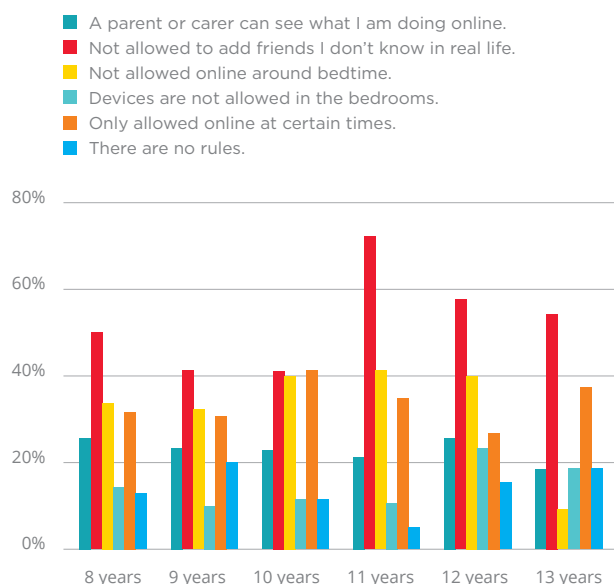


TABLE 23

As part of the Perceptions Project research, we also asked children when they were allowed to go online. As can be seen from Table 24 below, most children (59%) have rules in place for when they can go online and 3% are 'never' allowed to go online **but a notable 38% can go online whenever they want to**.

It is also worth highlighting that this freedom to go online whenever they wanted to, increased with age with 29% of 8 year olds and 33% of 9 year olds reporting that they could go online whenever they wanted to, rising to 37% of 10 year olds, 41% of 11 year olds and 44% of 12 year olds.

When are you allowed go online?

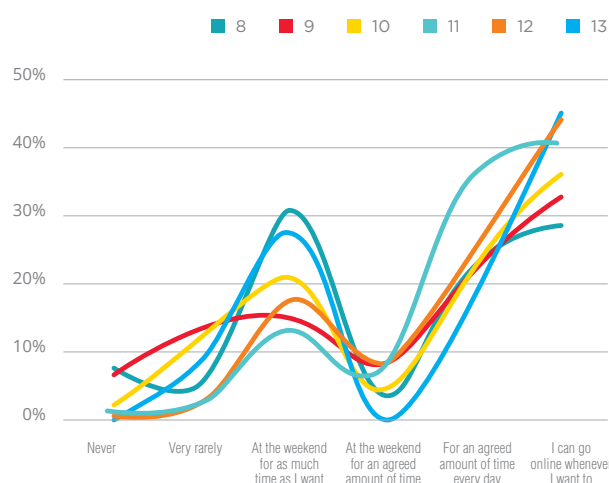


TABLE 24

In addition, we asked children how often their parents (or another adult who is looking after them) watch what you are doing when they are online? Table 25 highlights the finding that overall, most children (45%) had a parent or carer watching what they are doing online 'sometimes', which is perhaps the most realistic response although we would advise parents to have their kids in family spaces when they are online so that they can keep an eye on them and to have limits around use so that a healthy balance is maintained. That said, 8% said that their parents watch them 'always'. 15% reported that their parents were watching them 'most of them time' and a further 15% weren't sure. **More worryingly however, 17% of children reported that they were 'never' watched in terms of what they were doing when they were online.**

¹² Perceptions Project 2019.

How often do your parents/carers watch what you are doing online?

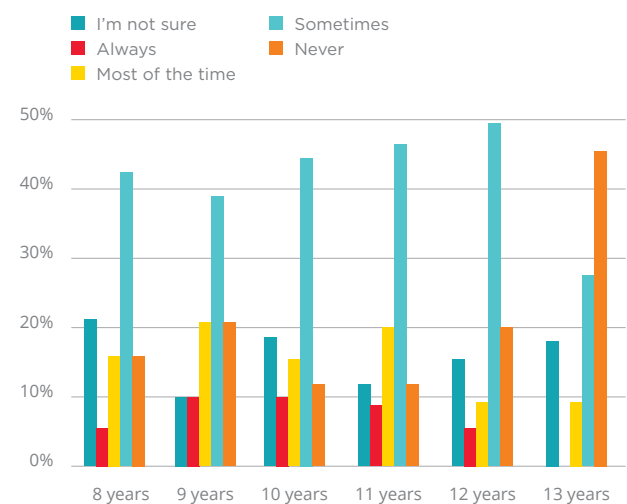


TABLE 25

This finding was borne out in the FGDs with some children indicating that they had a reasonable level of freedom about when and where they could go online. A boy aged 10 reported that he was “allowed to watch stuff to go to sleep” and another aged 11 said “my internet goes off at 10 but I just watch stuff on Netflix that I’ve downloaded”. A key issue with night time use in the bedroom is the lack of supervision. A girl aged 10 reported in one of the FGDs (School 1) that she “was playing Fortnite and there was this person and his name was Momo and he said he was going to come kill everyone. I didn’t tell my mam because she was in bed.”

.....

“Yesterday we were meant to be in bed reading and my brother aged 10 was playing games on the internet.”

BOY, AGE 11

“My mam turns off the PlayStation at 11 or 12 at night but then I go on my tablet” (mum doesn’t know).

BOY, AGE 11

Children who are more vulnerable online

Anecdotally we have long noted a trend for higher usage amongst children in schools in lower socio-economic status (SES) areas. This year, we decided to pull out the data from these schools and compare them to the overall findings. The data is based on responses from 1,605 children. As expected, the findings show higher usage and higher levels of vulnerability amongst this cohort of children. This trend has been explored more formally in academic research with the conclusion that disadvantaged children are more vulnerable as a result of lower levels of parental awareness and education on the risks associated with use.¹³

We have highlighted some of the key findings in the table below:

	Lower SES	Overall
Usage of Social Media	67%	60%
Online for 4+ hours each day	17%	12%
Talking to strangers every day	22%	17%
Ownership of a smart device	50%	42%
Playing over-18s games	33%	29%
Rarely or never talking to a parent about online safety	40%	36%
Has appeared in a You-Tube video	30%	26%

If we compare the data we find that children from low SES backgrounds are 29% more likely to talk to strangers every day and are 42% more likely to be online for 4+hours a day.

If we disaggregate the data further and focus on **8 year olds** specifically, we find that children in lower SES schools are 38% more likely to own a smartphone and they are 10% more likely to be on social media. We also find that 8 year olds boys from lower SES schools are 33% more likely to be playing over-18s games.

These findings indicate that there are higher levels of online usage and from a younger age amongst this cohort of children.

.....

¹³ Livingstone, S., Görzig, A. & Ólafsson, K., ‘Disadvantaged Children & Online Risk’ (November 2011), EU Kids Online, source: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39385/>

Feedback from Teachers and Parents

We gather feedback from parents following our parents' talks and also from teachers following the sessions with children. Feedback is voluntary and can be anonymous unless the respondent wishes to add their name to a testimonial.

Teachers

We collected a range of data from 140 teachers this year, some of which was qualitative to give us a sense of how well they felt the session was presented to the children, whether the content was comprehensive or if anything was missing. Other questions were geared towards helping us to understand trends. We have highlighted a few of the categories in the section below.

How well-managed was the session?

We asked teachers how well they felt that the presenter delivered the session and managed the group of children and Table 26 below illustrates that 97% of teachers rated the session as either good or excellent. In addition, 99% of teachers told us that they would recommend our sessions to other teachers.

How good was the presenter at delivering the materials and managing the audience?

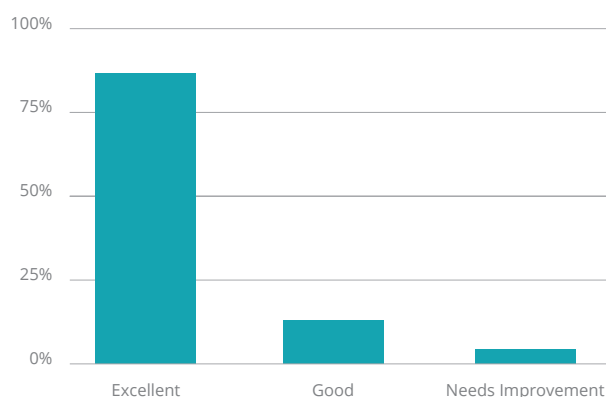


TABLE 26

How engaged were the children

It is important to us that children enjoy the session and that they engage in the discussion and in the materials. We ask teachers to indicate in the survey how engaged they felt that the students were in the session and as Table 27 indicates, the vast majority said that they were 'very' engaged (73%) or 'mostly' engaged (26%).

How engaged were the students during the cybersafety session?

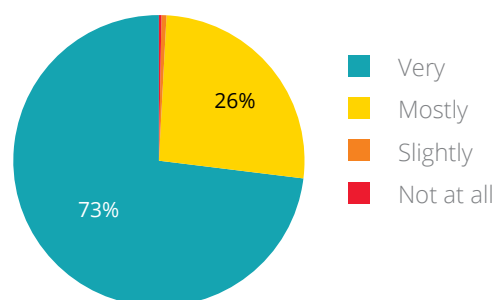


TABLE 27

Availability of resources

We asked teachers what resources were currently available to them to keep them informed on online safety. As Table 28 illustrates, most teachers (65%) said that 'e-learning' was the main source of learning followed by 'in-service training' (24%) and conferences (5%). **A small but significant number (17%) said 'none'.** Whilst there are really good resources available to teachers, particularly from Web-wise and PDST, this figure suggests that awareness levels amongst teachers about what resources are available, could be improved.

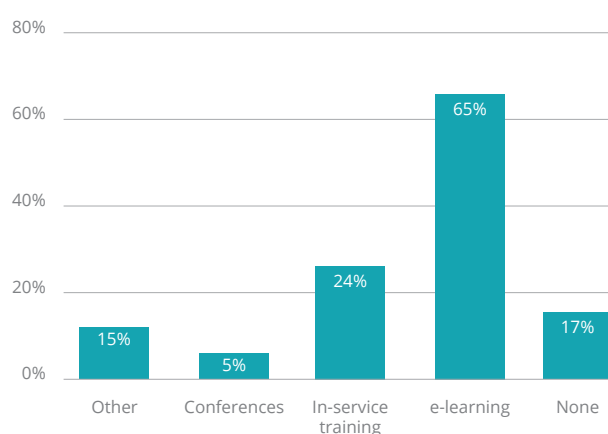


TABLE 28

How many online safety issues have you had to deal with over the past year?

We asked teachers to outline how many online safety issues they have had to deal with over the past year. In our experience, most incidences relate to some form of cyberbullying. Table 29 below shows that 41% of teachers did not have to deal with any incidences but the majority had dealt with at least one incident. 28% dealt with one incident and 21% dealt with 2 – 5 incidences. **The most striking figure is that 10% of teachers dealt with more than 5, which is significantly higher than last year’s figure of 5%.**

How many online safety issues have you had to deal with in the past year?

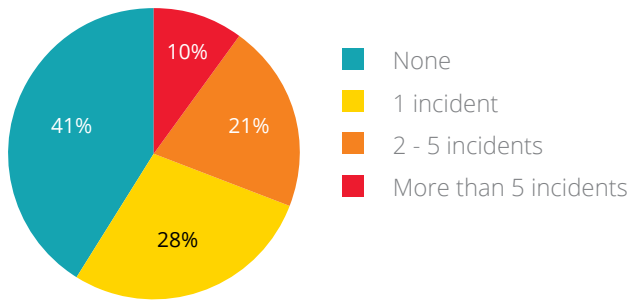


TABLE 29

Are teachers equipped with the skills and knowledge to teach online safety to children?

We also asked teachers if they felt sufficiently resourced to effectively deliver educational messages relating to online safety in the classroom and Table 30 indicates that most (52%) did not, which has significant implications in terms of educating children in this important area in the future.

Do you feel sufficiently resourced to effectively deliver educational messages relating to online safety?

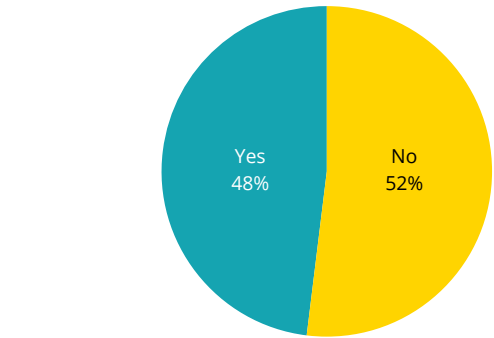


TABLE 30

Parents

We spoke to 1,261 parents over the course of the school year both in schools and in the workplace. 13% completed the online survey following the sessions so feedback is based on 160 parent responses. Like the teacher feedback forms, many of the questions are focused on the quality of delivery but a key objective of our education programme is to reach parents and enhance their awareness of the risks, opportunities and safeguards relating to Internet use so we also gather data around what they've learnt. We ask parents how much the session has enhanced their knowledge. As Table 31 below indicates, the vast majority of parents said 'hugely' (39%) or 'a lot' (48%).

How much has the session enhanced your knowledge of internet safety?

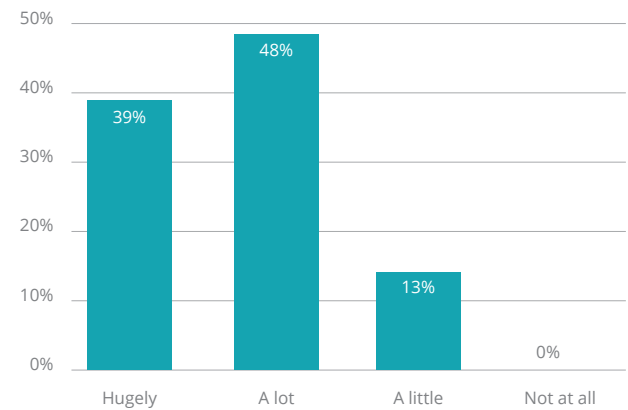


TABLE 31

How confident are you that you can apply what you have learned at home?

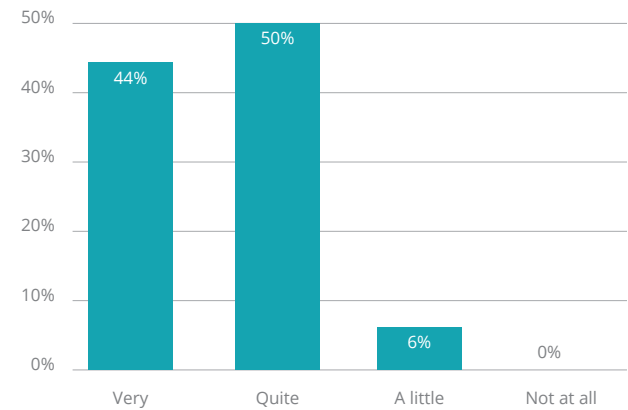


TABLE 32

We also ask parents how confident they feel that they can apply what they've learnt in the session at home. As Table 32 illustrates the vast majority (94%) felt 'very' or 'quite' confident that they could apply what they'd learnt at home, which is very important in terms of achieving the objective we have set around empowering parents to take simple steps towards online safety at home. We ask parents what they found most interesting about the session and most parents found the sections on social media/messaging apps and parental controls the most interesting (65% and 64% respectively) whilst 56% found the section on risks the most interesting. 100% of parents said that they would recommend our session to other parents.

PARENT TESTIMONIAL

"I found the session fantastic. I do look into things in great depth before a decision is made on what my son can and can't do/play/watch online.

I got great tips on how to manage this, and going forward as he gets older I am going to have to loosen the reins a little. I felt the emphasis on ensuring that the relationships between parent and child is secure was great...

I felt the session supported me as a parent and reassured me that I'm doing right!!"

CONCLUSION

.....

The Internet is here to stay and children's enthusiasm for it remains strong too. The onus is therefore on parents, educators, the online service providers and policy-makers to prepare them for it in a much more consistent and conscientious way. We need to support them to become safe and smart digital citizens, to be critical thinkers online, to find a healthy balance between their offline and online lives and to make the most of the opportunities that are offered by the online world, without putting themselves in harm's way.

We have collected a lot of data this year from children, parents and teachers and in addition, we have gathered research through focus group discussions with children, interviews with teachers, principals and home school liaison coordinators and discussions with parents. We have learnt a huge amount through this research and it is clear that we are simply not doing enough as a society to support children in their online use and access. Too many gaps remain. The vast majority of children that we surveyed over the last four years have access to the online world (most of them through their own smart device) and they are often doing so without sufficient guidance and support.

All of these findings emphasise the importance of equipping young people with the skills that they need to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. Parents have a huge role to play in preparing their children for the online world and it is essential that there is greater recognition of this responsibility, as we move forward. This involves conversations about

what they are seeing and doing online, doing some research to ensure more informed decision making, enabling technical restrictions on devices, holding off on getting them their first device until they are really ready for one and keeping an eye on them, especially when they are young.

Schools also have a significant role to play and most schools that we work with do cover the topic to some degree. What we need to see in place is a more comprehensive and consistently applied curriculum across primary and secondary schools that seeks to develop digital literacy skills as well as provide a more rounded relationships education that addresses boundaries, healthy relationships, pornography and consent. Children will be exposed to material online that may well not be appropriate for their age and for which they may not be ready. Unless we help to contextualise such content in meaningful discussions both at home and in school then we are failing to adequately prepare them for today's world, which is played out both online and offline. We also need to more consistently support our teachers to deliver this content and to have the vital ongoing conversations with their students.

Finally, we need more long-term and strategic thinking at the national level. We have outlined a number of recommendations below and we believe that putting in place these measures will make a significant difference in supporting the young people of today to become the safe, smart and responsible digital citizens of tomorrow.

PARENT TESTIMONIAL

"Excellent session, very informative, helpful in highlighting risks but also providing solutions. Concerning but not panic inducing"

RECOMMENDATIONS

.....

We need a **long-term (five-year) government strategy** that outlines how we are going to address the issues that arise from children's use of smart devices and access to the online world. This strategy must set clear goals and measurable targets. Measures should include:

- Ensuring **robust monitoring and regulation of the online service providers**:
 - This could be in the form of the **Digital Safety Commissioner** proposed by the current Government but it is essential that the office and commissioner are given a proper mandate and the necessary resources to hold online service providers to account – those with a presence in Ireland and those outside of it.
 - There should also be a much stronger focus on the need for **ethical design of apps and games** so that all users, but particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from a safer user experience.
- **Strong response mechanisms** for when things go wrong – access to expert helplines, advice and resources (including training for community gardai and other key stakeholders).
- **Public awareness campaigns targeting parents and children**: with the aim of creating social norms around online safety, much in the way that we have had, over the years, with road safety and healthy eating campaigns. We must get to a place where parents can make informed decisions about their children's online use and access.
- There needs to be **much greater focus given to the education of children and parents on online safety and digital well-being**:
 - We believe that it is essential that all children benefit from a good **Digital Literacy education** at both primary and secondary level in schools. Digital literacy will need to become the fourth pillar of our education system, alongside reading, writing and arithmetic. This will require investment in curriculum development, teacher training and supporting resources.
 - Every school needs a **digital champion** (a teacher or principal) who can lead on policy development, support and delivery of digital literacy and digital wellbeing education to children, parents and teachers. This will involve training teachers, developing new resources and signposting to the many good resources that are available.

TEACHER TESTIMONIAL

"Excellent session- very informative for both the students and teacher."

TEACHER, ST.BRIGIDS CASTLEKNOCK

This report (and much of the work that has gone into it)
was produced with the kind support of:



Jim & Diane Quinn





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