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Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: E.Safety Update – Securing Christmas Gadgets

As outlined in our E-Safety policy and as an essential commitment to Safeguarding we write to you today with essential information regarding your child's online safety.

This information is taken directly from the National Online Safety website, which has a wealth of useful resources and can help to keep parents and carers up to date with the latest online risks. Please visit: www.nationalonlinesafety.com

High-tech toys and gadgets are topping Christmas gift lists this year, but it's essential you don't just hand your child a device and leave them to get on with it.

According to the UK's data regulator, net-connected toys and gadgets bought as Christmas gifts could put the privacy and safety of children at risk.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has warned parents to look carefully at toys containing sensors, microphones, cameras, data storage and other multi-media capabilities.

Popular products, including Furby-Connect, i-Que Intelligent Robot, Toy-Fi Teddy and CloudPets all offer Bluetooth connectivity and companion apps. Home speakers with integrated smart assistants, including Amazon's Echo and Google's Home, allow children to instantly find information through simple voice commands.

The ICO has suggested the following tips for buying smart toys and devices this Christmas and keeping them secure.

- Research the security of a product before buying
- Take care when shopping online – only use secure sites
- Take the time before Christmas Day to read the manual and get to grips with security and privacy options
- Change passwords and usernames on new devices from defaults
- Check your router has a strong password and latest security updates
- Use two-factor authentication when logging in to an online service
- Some toys and devices are fitted with web cameras – you can turn the remote viewing option off in the device's settings, or else use strong passwords
- Remove any default location tracking and GPS settings on new devices
- Some toys and devices have been found to have unencrypted Wi-Fi connections or unsecured Bluetooth connections – add a password or a PIN
- Chat to children about their online safety
- If you aren't convinced a smart toy or connected device will keep your children's personal information safe, then don't buy it.

Many thanks for your continued support in this matter, should you have any queries, questions or concerns please do come and speak with us.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs C Pilkington
Deputy Headteacher

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