



## ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 3 Issue 1

Happy New Year and welcome to 2012! We're looking forward to another year of providing you with evidence-based, practical advice for developing young people into ethical citizens. Don't mention it to your kids, but it's also almost time to head back to school. As your family begins preparing for another school year, you're likely to have a list of all the things you need: books, stationery, uniforms, gadgets, etc. The most important thing they need, however, is you – a well informed parent.

### Please can I have a new phone?

Technology can be a sign of status or personality for adults and young people alike these days, and your child may think they need the latest gadget to "fit in" at school. Before you purchase anything, you need to do your research. Look at the features of the device, customer reviews, estimated monthly bills and then compare with what you know about the maturity and behaviour of your child. What you may see as a security feature, can be misused by an irresponsible child.

It's also important to involve your child in the decision-making process. This will help them to better understand what's happening, and giving them input into the rules around usage may also better encourage them to follow those rules.

For older, more mature young people, you may wish to encourage them to pay for their own bills out of their pocket money or casual work. This responsibility will not only teach them about money management, but a US study also found that teenagers who paid their own phone bills were less likely to engage in sexting.

### Time2Talk

This section provides some useful conversation starters for talking with young people about their use of technology.

**Do you think it's important to have the latest device?**

**Whose responsibility is it to look after a school-issued device?**

**What could your teachers do to help you to better use technology?**

**What can we, as a family, do to make sure that we all use technology safely and responsibly?**

If the school is running an information night on internet safety and security around the issuing of devices, it is important to attend. Take a couple of hours out of your day to become a better informed parent and help your child to navigate technology safely and responsibly.

### Practise what you preach

It's a little bit late, but you might wish to add a new year's resolution to your list this year. Choose one of the rules your family has set around tech-safety and security and follow it yourself. Whether it's no mobile phone at dinner, not gossiping about people online or being more discerning with your facebook friends; make it a rule YOU will

## School-issued devices

Some schools provide students with school-issued devices such as laptops and tablets at the beginning of the school year. Don't just look a gift horse in the mouth – ask about their security and safety procedures. Find out what the school is doing to provide a safe learning environment on the device, what policies they have in place and who you can speak to if you have any concerns.

It is very likely that you and your child will have to sign an agreement on the use of the device, don't just sign it and throw it away! Make sure you know what your responsibilities are too. You may even wish to follow similar guidelines around the use of home computers. Children and young people have become very adept at circumventing filtering and blocking behaviour so don't think that it's 100% safe because it has parental control software or similar activated.

follow this year. Children and young people need more positive role models around their use of technology and you can be that role model.

The lessons we try to impart on young people really aren't that specific to children, they apply to everyone who uses technology. So share them with friends, family members, coworkers, anyone who uses these devices and applications! How can we expect young people to make ethical and informed decisions when they see no one else doing so?

