

PRESS RELEASE

The first in a series of videos designed to support parents and children navigate online safety will be launched Monday 25th May, on the Kildare/West Wicklow parenting forum Facebook page: www.facebook.com/parentingsupport/.

These short videos were developed in Co. Kildare, with a group of parents from St. Farnan's Post Primary School, Prosperous. The project is a response from a number of agencies including; County Kildare LEADER Partnership, Foróige Drug Prevention & Education Initiative and Tusla, all working together under the umbrella of Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee, Kildare CYPSC, with the aim of supporting parents to keep their children safe online.

The videos were filmed in December 2019 and edited in early 2020. They were due to launch in March, at the time that the Coronavirus resulted in the widespread closure of services. The launch was postponed until now.

The Home School Community Liaison Officer in St. Farnan's, Andrew Little, supported the project and he feels that these videos "are a really good method of communicating with parents. It is great for parents in Kildare to receive messages from other parents with whom they can relate. It makes the information seem more relevant."

The videos provide online safety tips and encourage parents to do five key things;

1. "Start the conversation" - Parents start talking with your children about online safety, early in their online life.
2. "Agree limits" - Parents can download a family agreement template and learn about the importance of setting limits to online time.
3. "Be informed" - It is important for parents to keep themselves informed about the online world, and this video provides some tips for helping parents stay up to date.
4. "How much time was I online today?"
Parents can set positive examples regarding online activity to their children through their own online lives.
5. "Parents share and learn"
The support of parent to parent peer support is fantastic, and this video encourages parents to link in with each other to provide that support network.

Being involved in the initiative made Laura Ryan, one of the participating parents, think about her own online time and the importance of parents leading by example in how they conduct themselves online. Laura also feels that parents supporting other parents is hugely important and said "every parent has got some worry about their child or children and talking to other parents is a great support."

The changes to our world since Covid19 has highlighted the potential benefits of technology, the internet and online connectivity. The videos purpose is to raise awareness among parents about the importance of staying involved in the online life of their child/children to ensure that they experience cyberspace safely.

Denise Hayes, another parent involved in the project echoed that sentiment, "when you hand over a device to a child you are opening them to the worldwide web, and parents need to know that the dangers are real and stay in touch with monitoring their use of it."

Laura Ryan also reflected on the situation today versus ten years ago when her children were in their pre-teens. "Back then there was less known about online risks. Now there is much greater awareness of the dangers to young people as well as the benefits. And ultimately, we are in a more informed place about the importance of the role parents play in their children's online lives."

This campaign reminds parents, that there is no quick fix in supporting their child's online life, but small interventions can have positive lasting results.

ENDS

Additional Information

- This campaign is funded as a result of a successful funding application to Tusla's Parental participation initiative under the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) programme. And funding from Kildare CYPSC through Better Outcomes Brighter Futures Programme funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- Kildare Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) is a group comprising 15 different organisations who work with children, young people and families in Co. Kildare. The purpose of Kildare CYPSC is to work together to improve the lives of families in our county.
- This group also has a website called [Parentingsupport.ie](https://parentingsupport.ie) with lots of resources and information about training events happening online and within Kildare and West Wicklow.
- For more information about this campaign please contact:
 - Monday or Friday Emma Berney on emma.berney@tusla.ie 086 4178220 or ,
 - Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday Áine Byrne on aine@countykildarelp.ie or 086 0414223.