Safe internet day creating safer communities.

In the digital age, cyber safety is top of mind for most parents.

This year, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) is acknowledging the importance of Safer Internet Day (11 February).

This annual event, helps encourage a better, safer internet and is celebrated globally in 130 countries.

SCHHS, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Child Protection Unit, Laura Easterbrook said parents and health professionals generally do everything they can to keep children safe and well, but when it comes to cyber safety it is easy to feel out of their depth.

“Often they are unaware of the dangers. Innocent searches online can lead to not-so-innocent results, so it’s wise to know how to use the parental controls and search restrictions offered by web browsers, internet service provider and devices," she said.

“As adults, we know that some people online aren’t who they say they are, but children and young people can be alarmingly naïve about who they are chatting with if they are not taught to be cyber wise from an early age,” Ms Easterbrook said.

If your child uses social networks, be sure they know how to:

- Report inappropriate and/or offensive posts
- Block someone
- Keep personal information private.

Ms Easterbrook encouraged parents to: “Lead by example and always model the kind of positive online behaviour you would like your children to use”.

“Remember you and your children have a digital footprint once information is shared publicly, it can be used in ways you may not expect and cannot control. We all need to be smart about protecting our images and information online,”

Parents and carers can start a conversation about staying safe online by asking:

- What are the best new apps?
- What do you and your friends do online?
- Do you know what cyberbullying is?
- Have you even seen anything that makes you feel uncomfortable?
Who do you talk to online?
Have you met everyone you talk to online in real life?

For more information and resources on how to keep our children safe visit:

https://www.thinkuknow.org.au/

ENDS

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