6 things to do before your child uses their new mobile phone

Maybe you've dodged the requests for years, or this has always been part of the plan. Either way, your child is getting their first mobile phone.

Christmas is a popular time for kids to be gifted their first mobile phone. However, before they record their unboxing and disappear into their rooms, here are six things you need to do first to ensure they (and their phone) stay safe.

1. **Set a PIN or password**
    This will prevent anyone other than your child from using their phone. Make sure you explain to your child the importance of not sharing this PIN or password. This function is usually under settings but you can use the search function to locate if you are unsure. We also suggest that for younger teens and tweens, parents should also have the password. If they refuse to give it over, take the phone off them or change the wifi password. No password, no wifi

2. **Turn on appropriate filters**
    With the help of your service provider, adult content filters can be applied to prevent your child from accessing certain websites and seeing inappropriate content aimed at people over 18.

3. **Stop in-app purchases**
    To stop your kids from running up a huge bill through online games or Apps, apply a PIN to be required before a purchase can take place. This can simply be done by visiting the App or Play store on the device and selecting the option for always requiring authentication.

4. **Know what they're installing**
    Sit down with your child as they set up their device with their favourite games and Apps. Ask them what each one does and why they like it, this is a great way to open up a trusting conversation about their phone use.

5. **Apply privacy and location settings**
    Located within the settings of most popular social media platforms, privacy and location settings are important for protecting who can and can't see your child's activity as well as protecting their location from being given away.

6. **Set screen time limits**
   Sit down with your child and discuss appropriate screen time limits together. By doing this collaboratively, they are more likely to stick to them and not get upset when their time is coming to an end. It also gives them a little bit more responsibility when it comes to the use of their device.

As your School, we are always here to support you and we encourage you to come to us with questions or concerns you may have on this topic.