HTML Heroes show the power of online safety for young children

Children are accessing the internet from a younger age and require an ever-evolving set of digital skills for the world we live in. To help pupils develop these digital skills and to navigate the online world safely and responsibility, Webwise, the Irish internet safety awareness centre, recently launched a new online safety education programme for young children; *HTML Heroes: Welcome to the Internet*. The HTML Heroes Programme has been designed for teachers of 1st and 2nd class to introduce pupils to the first steps of accessing and using the internet in a safe and responsible manner.

Aligned to the SPHE Curriculum, the five lessons explore using the internet safely, communicating online, playing and learning online, getting help and support. The centrepiece for each lesson is a short, illustrated story featuring the HTML Heroes, Ruby and Archie, as they navigate the online environment and various internet safety themes and topics such as safe searching, identifying age-appropriate content online, respectful online communication and online wellbeing that arise as they do. The programme concludes with the *HTML Heroes Online Safety Code Song* which emphasises the key safety message throughout the resource for children to 'Stop, Think and Check' with a trusted adult when connecting and navigating the online world. Home school links are also encouraged throughout with each lesson featuring a take-home handout for parents with a lesson summary and further online safety advice on the relevant topic.

The HTML Heroes 1st and 2nd Class Online Safety Education Programme is available for free to order or access digitally here: www. webwise.ie/html-heroes.

TRACY HOGAN, Webwise education officer and LEANNE LYNCH, PDST digital technologies advisor

Using digital technologies to develop digital citizenship skills

1st and 2nd class

The development of pupils' digital skills is fundamental for them to successfully engage with the world through the internet. The following are key points to consider when using technology with your 1st and 2nd class pupils ...

SIMPLICITY
Keep it simple. Use one website or app and think about creative ways of how you can meaningfully integrate it to develop language learning or knowledge and understanding of a topic that you have planned to explore in your Scéimeanna Coicíse.

MODEL
Model what you want your pupils to do. If you have access to a laptop or tablet and can connect it to a whiteboard in your classroom, you can introduce your pupils to the features of a new digital resource on a whole class level together. For example, if you wanted to introduce your pupils to a new digital storytelling tool such as Write Reader or Book Creator, you could engage them in a shared digital writing experience to create a class book. This would not only provide you with an opportunity to model how to use the new tool but it would also be an excellent opportunity to focus on the writing process itself.

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS
Have clear expectations for your pupils to follow about handling devices and their behaviour when working in pairs or groups. A good idea would be to involve your pupils in creating a simple class 'digital contract' so that they know what is expected of them.

USE AGE-APPROPRIATE RESOURCES
If you are looking for reliable, age-appropriate websites that your 1st and 2nd class pupils can use to find information online, consider *Epic!, World Book Online, Britannica School, DK Find Out, National Geographic Kids, Wonderopolis* and *Kiddle*. There are also exciting, and yet simple online digital resources and apps such as *Write Reader, ChatterPix, Book Creator* and *Scratch Jr* that your 1st and 2nd class pupils can use to creatively express their learning.

Finally, you can apply for school support in the area of digital technology on the PDST website at www.pdst.ie/schoolsupport.