Decoding privacy: talking points to set up new tech

As the school year kicks off, students are not only diving into new textbooks but also navigating the digital realm with new technologies and programs in the classroom. In this age of interconnected learning, it's not uncommon for children to encounter various online platforms that request their information. While the data requested may seem minimal, it's a crucial moment for parents to start a conversation about privacy and responsible data sharing.

Understanding the digital landscape

In today's educational landscape, technology is a vital tool for enhancing learning experiences. As your child encounters new tools, programs and devices – including laptops and tablets – they may be prompted to sign up and share personal information. It's important to recognise that while the data requested by school-approved education tech – also known as Edtech – may be minimal compared to other platforms, it sets the stage for your child's future interactions in the digital world.

The significance of privacy

Privacy is a fundamental right, and even in the digital age, it should be respected. When your child enters personal details on these platforms, they are engaging in a transaction that involves trust. It's an opportunity to discuss with them the importance of safeguarding their information and being mindful of how it might be used.

Initiating the conversation

Approaching the topic of privacy can be done in an age-appropriate manner. Begin by asking your child about their experiences with the new digital tools. You might say, "I heard you're using some exciting new programs in class. Can you tell me about them?" Then ask them what information they needed to share to get access to the programs, and what their thoughts are on doing that. You may find that some didn't even pause to consider what personal information they were providing, and the potential risks of that.

Making privacy relatable

To make the concept of privacy relatable, consider using familiar examples. You could say, "Just like we lock our front door to keep our home safe, we also need to be careful about who gets access to our personal information online. It's like having a digital lock to protect your virtual space."

Empowering responsible digital citizenship

Use this moment to highlight the idea of responsible digital citizenship. Explain that being mindful of what information they share online is a key part of navigating the digital world in a good way.

Encourage them to ask questions such as, "Why is this information needed?" and "How will it be used?" This cultivates a habit of critical thinking about privacy concerns.

Setting boundaries

Help your child establish boundaries for online sharing. Discuss the importance of only sharing information that is necessary for the task at hand and avoiding oversharing. Reinforce the idea that it's okay to question and seek your guidance when unsure about sharing certain details.

Staying involved

Stay actively involved in your child's digital experiences. Ask to learn about the platforms they are using and familiarize yourself with the privacy settings. This not only reinforces the importance of privacy but also shows that you are engaged and supportive of their online activities.

As your child embarks on a new school year filled with technological advancements and new Edtech, take this opportunity to lay the foundation for a healthy approach to privacy and data sharing.

By initiating open and age-appropriate conversations, you empower your child to become a responsible digital citizen, navigating the digital classroom with confidence and awareness.

Key takeaways:

1. Tech in school: When children use new tech in school they often share personal info. It's not much, but it sets the stage for this as an acceptable request.

2. Privacy matters: Privacy is important, even online. When children share info, it's like a trust deal. Talk to them about why it's crucial to protect their info.

3. Start a chat: Ask about their new digital tools. What info did they enter? Many don't realise the risks of sharing personal stuff.

4. Use references they'll know: Explain privacy using everyday examples – like locking the house when you leave.

5. Be a smart digital citizen: Teach responsible online behaviour. Encourage questions like "Why is this info needed?" and "How will it be used?" Set limits on sharing and stay involved to show you care about their online activities. This sets the foundation for a smart and safe approach to tech and privacy.