Kidproof has been to Roberts MeCubbin PS this week and discussed cyber safety and digital citizenship issues with the students.

The Cybersafe Early Years program, aimed at F-2 students got us talking with the kids about being good online citizens.

We discussed treating each other nicely and saying only nice things about each other. It feels pretty good when we hear nice things about ourselves, and we can feel not so great when people say things about us that are not nice or are not true. This is the same thing we want to remember when we are online.

The students participated in a mask activity, where they made up a “pretend” person. The objective of this activity is to show younger students how someone else can convince them that they are a certain age, assure them what they look like, or prove they like specific things (such as games) which ultimately are not true. It is quite easy to be tricked by an online friend. Good digital citizenship means that we never pretend to be someone other than ourselves.

We must be very careful and only speak with those people that we know as face to face friends. We recommend that parents sit down with their child and make a ‘safe’ contact list. People that make the ‘safe’ list include parents, grandparents, close friends, neighbours, cousins, etc. This doesn’t guarantee safety, but it certainly eliminates randoms who may try to contact your child.

Children are only allowed to speak to those people that they know face to face, and are on their approved list. If someone who is not on the list contacts them, or someone is asking ‘strange’ questions, they need to let an adult know as soon as possible.

It is really important that children also have safe screen names and email addresses – one that is not their full name, birthday or gives anything too much away about their age, gender or passions (ilovecats@gmail for example). Parents can reinforce the S.T.O.P rules:

S—say things and treat others how you want to be treated.
T—tell an adult if something you see online makes you feel uncomfortable.
O—only talk to or message with people that you know face to face or that an adult has approved of.
P—personal information (name, address, phone number, school name) needs to stay private.

Keep a look out for the worksheets that have come home with your child. Open up discussions in regards to online safety and good digital citizenship—and keep those conversations ongoing. Safe Kids have Safe families. Safe kids have safe families.