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Dear Parents and Carers,

ONLINE SAFETY – YEAR 5

In e-safety, we have been learning about why people change and alter their photos using computer programs like Photoshop. We found out the following:

- The models in lots of adverts do not look real and have been altered to be better looking.
- People also alter food in adverts to make it look more delicious (we looked at a McDonalds advert).
- People look more attractive in adverts because it means that the company can make more money.
- Even famous people are changed to look better (men look more muscular and women look thinner and more tanned!).

When people see these adverts, it can make them very self-conscious and they wonder why they are not as muscular or as pretty as the people on the adverts. Consequently, the adverts can have a big effect on how people perceive themselves.

When we see adverts, it is important to remember that nobody really looks like the people in them; we shouldn't worry if we don't look like what we see on these adverts. Even if you did what a magazine was telling you, it would be impossible to look like the people on the front of it.

Just remember that you are perfect the way you are and you don't need to change who you are to look like other people.

From 5E, 5S, Miss Eggleton and Mr Sharp

Common Sense on Boys, Girls and Media Messages



What's the Issue?

In today's 24/7 media world, girls and boys are flooded with messages about how they should look and act. The images and stories that children see in the media play a powerful role in framing their sense of what's "acceptable" and what isn't. The media often encourages narrow definitions of girls' and boys' roles, and these definitions are now making their way into the digital world. As children grow older and become more active online, they may encounter more extreme attitudes about differences between girls and boys. Our media landscape has widened, creating new forms and sources of pressure for girls to look pretty and "sexy" and for boys to toughen up and "act like a man".

Why Does It Matter?

When children see the same gender stereotypes portrayed over and over again in the media, they can become deeply confused about how the world sees them and what they can grow up to be. They may also form judgements about others based on what they see in stories and images. When children are exposed to rigid ideas about boys' and girls' roles through their peers – both online and offline – it may be more difficult to convince them not to adopt those ideas.

What Families Can Do

In this digital age, it's important for children to develop media-literacy skills early on. Parents, carers, relatives, teachers and other adult mentors are in an important position to help children make sense of the gender messages they see on TV, at the movies, in ads, in games and online – and to encourage them not to continue harmful stereotypes.

common sense says

Point out photos that look too good to be true. When you're standing in line at the supermarket with your children, take a look at the magazine covers. Explain how publishers use computers to airbrush images of people. Point out elements of our bodies that would normally be captured in photos but are missing there. Where are the freckles, veins or wisps of hair?

Seek our positive role models. The characters and stars that children love may not show a complete picture of boys' and girls' roles. Help them by finding role models in books, on TV, in movies and in real life that show children how they can be recognised for their talents and brains rather than their looks.

Challenge assumptions. Depending on your children's ages, you can talk about common stereotypes and ask your children whether or not to accept them. Use examples from the real world – such as all blondes are dumb, for example – to show that media portrayals are often inaccurate.

Picture Perfect



* DID YOU KNOW ...

One of the most popular ways to change a digital image is through a computer program called Photoshop. Photoshopping is common in the media, not only to make people look better but even to make nature look brighter! A New York Times article on Photoshopping described the editing of nature pictures: "Skies are made brighter, animals become flawless, grass is made to look greener, and, in a recent issue of Women's Health, sheep were made to look whiter."

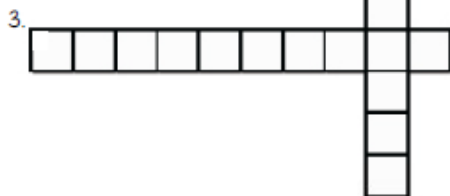
Crossword Puzzle

Across:

2. something that a company advertises and sells
3. to manage skillfully and especially with intent to deceive

Down:

1. to change the way something looks
2. a way of regarding or understanding something



* WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why do you think so many photos in magazines and advertisements are altered? How might altering a photo help sell a product?

* DO YOU REMEMBER ...

How photos can be changed on the computer and how that can affect our feelings about the way we look?

1. Family Activity

With a family member, watch the video "McDonald's Ads Versus the Real Thing" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zx1lvvLuuEI>). What differences do you notice between the advertisements and the real versions?

2. Tech It Up!

Try your hand at enhancing a photo to make it look even more perfect, fun, or appealing! With Pixlr, upload a picture you've saved to your desktop and play with the editing tools to enhance the image (<http://apps.pixlr.com/editor/>). (Hint: In Pixlr, go to "File ~> Open Image" to open a picture you've saved on your computer.)

3. Common Sense Says ...

Photos that appear in advertisements are usually Photoshopped, which is why they look so perfect. Don't be fooled!