DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, GURGAON
CREATE CONNECT RESPECT: towards better Digital Citizenship
REPORT

A public forum was organized to explore diverse perspectives and various strategies to ensure a safer online environment for the children in India by the Government of Maharashtra in collaboration with Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) on *8th August 2018* at the Claridges. The event was attended by the teachers of our school to understand and be a part of an important change and development affecting the lives of our students. The idea was to bridge the gap: from a digital migrant to being a digital native for parents and teachers. For our children, the digital natives, the need is to create a safer and informed environment.

The gathering saw the presence of esteemed guests: *Javier Aguilar*, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF; *Kuek Yu-Chang*, MD Netflix APAC; *Stephen Balkam*,CEO, FOSI, Gowri Ishwaran, CEO, tGELF; *Vedant Khaitan*, Khaitan School & Co-Chair, North-FICCI Arise; *Divya Balagopal*, Partner, Mundkur Law Partners; *Rakshit Tandon*, Cybersecurity expert and *Ranjana Kumari*, Head, Centre for Social Research

Vedant Khaitan: sharing his vision.

The event began with the address of *Javier Aguilar*, for whom five elements are the key for Digital safety of our children: Good Parenting techniques, Credibility of the stake-holders, Empowerment of young minds, Building life-skills and bridging the digital divide. *Vedant Khaitan* focused on the role of three key players: parents, schools and communities, working in collaboration. He emphasized the role of governments to improve school standards and making policies that are preventive in nature, updating school curriculum and counseling students and parents.

KuekYu- Chang emphasized the role of empowering children and not stopping them from accessing the internet by focusing on child-appropriate material and using of parental controls. Thus, the need of the hour is, parents who are digitally smart, to create digitally safe world for children.

Stephen Balkam presented the 7 steps to good digital parenting, where the children along with their parents take responsibility of their actions online. He focused on the role of communication with children as vital. Educating parents about internet and use of parental controls, setting ground rules and applying sanctions on children incase rules are broken are important.

Stephen Balkam addressing the gathering

The Panelist:
Stephen Balkam, Rakshit Tandon, Moderator, Ranjana Kumari, Gowri Ishwaran and Divya Balagopal

The event saw the entire esteemed panelist discussing the core issues and problems of the digital world. They addressed critical questions: who are the stakeholders? What should be the involvement of community? For *Ranjana Kumari*, creating accurate data regarding the usage and access of children to digital world was important. *Gowri Ishwaran* focused on the need of creating wise citizens who have values like empathy and team-work. For *Rakshit Tandon*, the need of the hour is to give our children the right platform to use the digital world rather than inhibiting their talents.

The event ended on a positive note that digital world is not a threat but an opportunity towards a brighter future, which we need to accept and adjust to. Our children are the future of this new world and we need to empower them and not inhibit their talents.