

INTERNET SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents,

February 2019

We have put together some information for parents to help you to keep your child, children and family safe on line. During Internet Safety Day last week, Mr Ryan and one of our Governors, Mr Coleman, spent some time talking to our children about their online habits. As a result of this, we know we need to increase the education we give our children around this topic and feel very strongly that parents also need further support. It is clear to us from the conversations we have had with some children that you may not be aware of what they are doing on line and may not be aware therefore, of the dangers they may be putting themselves in, being at risk of being harmed by on-line predators.

This may seem dramatic, however, I do not feel that this topic can have too much air time and we all need to take this seriously. I have had conversations recently with my local colleague Headteachers, who are equally worried about how online activity and the dangers our pupils face, is a problem getting out of control and we need to take collective action.

Specifically, during last week, the following topics are of concern:

- 'Granny': We were told about a game called 'Granny' which is a downloadable app. The content of this game is frightening for most children and I feel poses a risk of harm to young children. At the very least, those not scared by it may become de-sensitised to the level of violence enacted in the game. I do not feel this is an appropriate game for any child of primary school age and hope that parents will support us in denying this game to their children.
- Age restrictions: this issue was discussed last week too, and it seems that many of our children and families are ignoring these or are not aware of them. For example, the minimum age for Whatsapp, Snapchat and Facebook is 13 but no proof of identity is needed to set up/download them. There are good reasons for the age restrictions.
- YouTube: use of this app and streaming pictures of themselves is an issue. This has the potential for significant harm to children and young people as they grow up. There are guides for YouTube for parents. There are plenty of fantastic games and apps that allow children and young people to have fun, connect with their friends and learn from this technology, safely.

In order to help and support you as parents, we have become an Online Community Certified School. This means we have paid for a subscription to National On-line Safety which is an organisation providing lesson plans, monthly updates about online content and activity, training courses for staff, information for parents and training for parents. This is all FREE to parents of pupils at our school and I would urge you all to look at the training and take the online safety training course for parents. It gives a broad outline of topics you might then like to follow up and should help you improve your knowledge of this topic. I have downloaded many of the guides you can get from their website, some of which we have sent out before, and these will be available during parent consultation evenings in the hall, or you can download them yourselves.

Parents can login as follows:

<https://lms.nationalonlinesafety.com/school/honeybourne>

You will then be prompted to use your own email address to create an account.

There are other avenues you may wish to follow to update your knowledge as a parent:
PACE, NSPCC, CEOP and Thinkuknow, all of whom have resources and videos for parents and children.

We are very happy to hear of your experiences where you have found a good resource or have a worry you want to share with others that might avoid distress.

In addition to the information above, we will be running another workshop/information evening for parents after half term, similar to the one held last term. We are working on resources for that and hope to have input from the police too.

We are very interested in your feedback/response to this letter and to the general topic of online safety as well as more generally, how children and young people use gaming and electronic devices to connect to the outside world. Please complete the feedback slip in school or the one attached, or email us to let us know your views and any help and support you may offer.

Thank you for taking time to read this and give this topic your due consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E Huntington
HEADTEACHER

Parental feedback sheet for online safety

I would like to make the following comments:

Child(ren)'s name:

Parent's name:

Date:

