



St Paul's C of E Junior School

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Headteacher: Mrs J M Taylor

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Dear Parents,

Re: Keeping your child safe online

Sites and apps such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and Snapchat etc. offer amazing communication and social connections, but are created with age 13+ users in mind. We appreciate that it is at the discretion of parents as to whether they permit a child to use social media outside of school, but we strongly advise that the necessary controls are in place.

Serious hurt and damage is caused by thoughtless internet use and recently one of our Year 6 pupils has been on the receiving end of some to some hurtful, unkind and unnecessary comments on WhatsApp. Inappropriate comments reflect very badly on the person responsible for the original message and on those that share, tag or comment. Whether serious or light-hearted, intended to hurt or not, postings become part of the user's public image and sometimes a vehicle for online bullying.

Our school is committed to promoting safeguarding and every child is taught about how to stay safe online and of the dangers of the digital world. If we become aware that a pupil's wellbeing is being compromised by the out of school use of social media, we will not hesitate to fulfil our statutory duty of care, which may involve the reporting of underage accounts.

We would advise all parents to:

- encourage your child to talk to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or if they feel they may be being bullied;
- remind them that comments, video and photos can stay online forever and texts and iMessages are easily captured, copied and forwarded;
- ensure you are accepted as a 'friend' so that you can view their activity and what your child is being exposed to on social media sites;
- know which websites your child visits and show them the 'report abuse' and 'block sender' options so they feel in control;
- ensure password protection is used to keep files and information safe;
- get them to regularly check and clean their 'friends' lists on sites;
- urge them to keep evidence - not to delete bullying texts, emails or posts as callers and mailers can be traced;
- inform the police of any incidents of bullying via social media.

On our website you will find a range of guidance documents and additional information about keeping children safe online:

https://st-pauls.eschools.co.uk/website/esafety_supporting_your_child_using_the_internet_social_media/145161

Hopefully by working together we can keep every child in our school safe and happy.

Yours faithfully,

Julianne Taylor

Mrs J. M. Taylor

Headteacher

