



26 January 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. In an age where technology is an integral part of our lives, it is crucial for us all to be aware of the potential dangers our children face in the digital world. Recent news and statistics highlight the alarming impact of smartphones and social media on our children's well-being, necessitating our collective attention and action.

The key areas of concern are highlighted below:

- **Cyberbullying:** According to recent studies, a significant increase in cyberbullying cases has been observed among school-aged children. Cyberbullying can have severe consequences on mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and even, in extreme cases, self-harm.
- **Online Predators:** There has been a rise in incidents involving online predators targeting vulnerable children through social media platforms. Predators often exploit the innocence of children, posing a serious threat to their safety.
- **Excessive Screen Time:** Research warns against excessive screen time, as it has been linked to issues such as sleep disturbances, decreased physical activity, and impaired academic performance. Smartphones and social media contribute significantly to this concern.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Despite various safeguards, children can easily access inappropriate content online. This exposure can impact their psychological development and influence their behaviour negatively.

As a campus we have sadly witnessed an increase in incidents related to large Snapchat and Whatsapp groups, with some consisting of over 2000 members. It would seem apparent that our students often have no clear view of who they are engaging with. As a campus we will do all we can to educate and support our students but we sadly can not police social media, so we always encourage students to block, report and share concerns they may have. Significant amounts of our time is being spent dealing with chats that are taking place outside of school hours and we simply have not got the capacity to address this on our own, we need the support of our parents and guardians.

The Need for Parental Involvement:

As parents / guardians, it is imperative for us to take an active role in our children's digital lives. The school is committed to educating and guiding students, but a collaborative effort between home and school is essential for a comprehensive approach to online safety.

How You Can Support the School:

- **Open Communication:** Foster an open line of communication with your child. Encourage them to share their online experiences, both positive and negative, without fear of judgement.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear rules and boundaries regarding screen time and appropriate online behaviour. Regularly monitor your child's digital activities to ensure their safety.
- **Educate Yourself:** Stay informed about the latest apps, social media platforms, and online trends. This knowledge will empower you to guide your child effectively and recognize potential risks.

We will also be offering a drop in session in school to discuss the issues above after half term on Thursday 29th February from 5pm to 6pm in the Brookvale Hall. You can book onto this session using this link - [PARENT ONLINE SAFETY SESSION](#).

We have some comprehensive guides available to all parents on our website:

<https://brookvalegroby.com/safeguarding-useful-guides-for-parents/>

There are also many great sources of information online such as:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers/phones>

As a parent are you confident in what your child is engaging with online:

1. Do you have any parental controls set up on either their device or home WIFI?
2. Do you know what social media is being accessed? And the age limit?
3. Do you know who they are engaging with? Are they in these groups?
4. Do you know what they are posting and sharing on social media?
5. Do you know what is stored on their phone?

We appreciate there is a balance to be had between respecting your child's privacy, fostering positive relationships built on trust and checking they are safe. You will know how best to approach this topic with your child but the conversation is critical

Remember, the well-being of our children is a shared responsibility. By working together, we can create a safer and more supportive environment for them to navigate the digital world responsibly.

Yours sincerely,



Will Teece
Headteacher