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## **E-safety/ use of mobile phones**

Dear Parents

With the summer holidays almost upon us I am writing to you about e-safety both as an issue in school and at home.

As you will be aware the world of computers and the internet is changing daily. This brings with it amazing possibilities in every aspect of our life but also very real dangers.

As a school we want to enable our children to become computer literate and learn how to use, to its best advantage, the amazing tool that is the internet. As a teaching/learning aid it is now invaluable. The ability to research facts and data is almost instant and enables us to provide our children with a wonderfully enriching and stimulating curriculum.

However, we are also aware that use of the internet carries with it a huge health warning. There are sites, images and uses to which some people put the internet that are most definitely not suitable for our children.

In school we are able to use the latest firewalls and filters, provided by the Local Authority, to ensure that our children are not exposed to any unsuitable material, if they were to stumble upon a site or image that was unsuitable they know to turn off the screen immediately and alert a member of staff. We ensure that the children are always supervised when using the internet; they are never allowed access without an adult present.

Teaching children about e-safety has now become, in many ways, more important than the old mantra of "stranger danger", which we still reinforce in school. The children are taught about safe use of the internet, avoidance of web cams and social media sites and to never give away any personal details concerning themselves or their family and friends. None of our children are old enough to have their own Facebook account, if they do they have falsified their age, presumably with your consent.

The concern over safe use of the internet is equally pertinent when considering the use of mobile phones. These can also be both a tool for good but can through inappropriate texting be a problem area. I am sure you understand our stance on **NO** mobile phones in school. If contact is needed between yourselves and your child this can be done through the school office.

This message of inappropriate texting can also apply to adult use with parents being advised not to send inappropriate text messages which may be considered defamatory to members of staff or our wider parental body. Professional standing and reputations are important issues to us all.



I am sending home with this letter a copy of an internet safety guide for parents. It is not the only such guide and some of the content you may feel is not appropriate for your child at this time. I would urge you to think again. It is vitally important that you as parents take a lead on this.

We can do much in school to educate our children on this subject but the majority of their time spent on the internet will be at home. This is particularly true during weekends and holidays. Please make sure that you know what your child is doing when they are on line or texting.

Please reinforce the message about keeping personal details and images private. Never to meet anyone they have been in touch with on line without your knowledge. Never accepting messages from people they don't know. Telling you when they feel uncomfortable about something they have seen. **But above all please ensure that you know when they are using the internet and they are doing so in your presence.** Check their accounts regularly and consider whether it is appropriate for your child to have an account in the first place. It is a legal requirement that all users of Instagram and Facebook should be 13 years of age. If your child is using them they must have falsified their age and they/you are breaking the law.

With best wishes

Mr A Rush

