

Rettendon Primary School



Important Safeguarding Notice

Dear Parents,

It has been brought to our notice that some of the children in this school have become vulnerable to a potential safeguarding situation if they have an Instagram account.

If your child uses Instagram you should:

- Be checking regularly and thoroughly their followers and ensure you know who they are
- Ensure your child knows what to do if followers make comments that make them feel uncomfortable (this is routinely covered in school)
- Report anything that worries you to the school or the authorities

The problem that has occurred (allegedly) is that several of the girls have been befriended by a character who has lied about their age and has started to groom through increasingly personal questions and comments, such as 'what kind of clothes do you like to wear?'.

The difficulties in managing this as a parent are:

- Your child will want as many followers as possible as they use this as measure of personal popularity. As a result, they may accept all followers who apply
- Every time your child posts an image the geolocation is easily retrieved by followers
- Followers can re-share images and so you have no control where your child's image gets shared beyond the group
- Your child will not want to tell you if things go wrong in case you shut down their account

I am alarmed to discover today that some of the young girls in this school have followers that number in the **several hundred**. I doubt if the children or you know who most of these followers are. The perpetrator has befriended many of the children in this school already which is very worrying.

Take action now and check your child's devices. Ask them to share their account with you. **Establish how many followers they have and their identity.** Then, lay down some rules about safe use of social software packages. Screenshot and report anything worrying without delay.

Please watch <http://www.teensafe.com/blog/everything-a-parent-needs-to-know-about-instagram/>

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