



Westerton Primary Academy

Telephone: 0113 2533504

Fax: 0113 2521050



Principal: Mrs S Makin M.A. B.Ed. (Hons) NPQH

Email: makinsr01@westerton.org.uk

Vice Principal: Mrs A Lazarus B.Ed. (Hons) NPQH

Assistant Principal: Miss A Booth B.A. (Hons) PGDE

5th July 2017

Dear Parents, Carers, Colleagues and Pupils

SAFEGUARDING ADVICE REGARDING OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

At this time of year, the days are long and the lighter evenings can mean that many children are playing outside after school, at weekends and during the school holidays. Our older children may be granted more independence and freedom by parents to play further away from home and out of parental sight. With this in mind, it is timely to distribute guidance for keeping children safe throughout the forthcoming holidays.

In 2016, a **UK Drowning Prevention Strategy** was launched. One of the key themes of the strategy is to raise awareness of the everyday risks, in, on and around water which can result in accidental drownings. **Quarry lakes** and similar man made open water such as **reservoirs** can share a number of features: deep and very cold water even on a very hot day. The sudden and unexpected changes in depth, steep or crumbling sides can make exiting the water very difficult. Concealed hazards beneath the water, underwater currents or pumps, weeds and submerged vegetation can entrap swimmers and expose them to pollution or other forms of contamination. An additional unforeseen danger is **Cold Water Shock** which results from entering cold water at a much lower temperature than the air. The impact of this can stop the ability to swim and self-rescue or indeed rescue others. As we are close to a reservoir, we felt this information was crucial to the safety of everyone.

Already, many of our children congregate in groups, either on the local playgrounds or in Haigh Wood. Activities with adult supervision can seem quite safe, such as the development of outdoor skills, for example, starting camp fires. However, this is not a safe pass time for children without adult supervision but it has been known to occur. Please do ensure that **matches, lighters** or indeed, any items which could be dangerous, such as **pen knives**, are not taken out by children who are being allowed to play out without supervision. In dry weather any small fire could easily get out of hand and would be of grave concern for the emergency services. Likewise serious accidents can happen through boisterous behaviour when implements are involved.

Children in pairs and small groups can really help to be responsible for each other's safety, though it is worth remembering that large, unsupervised groups can be intimidating to members of the public. It is advisable to ensure that children are **not walking alone** but are with a trusted friend, or collected, even during lighter evenings. Sometimes older children and teenagers may be in the same area, this in itself can be intimidating and will need close



Visit our School Website
www.westerton.leeds.sch.uk
Visit the Leodis Academies Trust Website
www.leodisacademiestrust.com

monitoring. Do consistently check that your child is safe and happy, unpressured and able to enjoy their spare time without fear.

Mobile phones are and continue to be forbidden at school and we know that the use of them inappropriately on the way home from school can lead to lapses of concentration and danger on the roads. However, having a mobile phone and/or a watch to keep track of time during unsupervised play outside school times, can help to keep children in touch with parents and provide the reassurance that support is close by should it be needed. Regular **monitoring of messages and social media** by parents is recommended to help prevent cyber-bullying and other E-Safety concerns.

Our local Police Officers and PCSOs are aware of the potential dangers with the situations outlined above and, even under tight budget restraints, will aim to support our community vigilantly. However, parental support in helping our children to prioritise safety will help to protect everyone. Thank you for your co-operation in this important matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. R. Makin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephanie Makin

Principal