16 May 2023

Safeguarding & Child Protection: Support and Advice for Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Dangers associated with online and social media use for children

At our school, we prioritise the wellbeing of our pupils and families above all else. We are committed to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment that fosters the academic, social, and emotional growth of every pupil. This *Safeguarding* letter containing advice, guidance, and information on the dangers associated with online and social media use for children. The QR codes included at the end of the letter will lead you to informative websites that offer resources, guidance, and tailored support for parents seeking additional information on this topic.

In today's digital age, the internet and social media have become an integral part of our daily lives. While these platforms have made communication and access to information easier, they also come with certain risks and dangers that we need to be aware of, particularly when it comes to our children's safety. There are several potential dangers associated with online and social media use for children. Here are some of the most common:
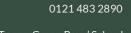
1. **Cyberbullying:** Children can be exposed to bullying and harassment online, which can have serious consequences for their mental health and well-being.
2. **Exposure to inappropriate content:** The internet is full of content that is not suitable for children, including violent or sexual content. Children may accidentally or intentionally access this content, which can be harmful.
3. **Grooming:** Online predators may use social media to target children and attempt to establish a relationship with them with the intention of exploiting them.
4. **Privacy concerns:** Children may unknowingly share personal information online, such as their location or contact details, which can be used by malicious individuals for nefarious purposes.
5. **Addiction:** Children can become addicted to social media and online games, which can negatively impact their academic performance, mental health, and social relationships.
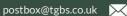
It's important for parents to be aware of these potential dangers and take steps to protect their children online. As a school, we offer some general advice for parents to help protect their children:

1. **Educate yourself and your child on online safety:** Take the time to understand the risks associated with social media and educate your child on how to safely navigate online platforms.

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2. **Set boundaries:** Establish rules around the use of technology in your home. This includes setting limits on screen time and establishing guidelines on what is and is not acceptable online behaviour.
3. **Monitor your child's online activity:** Keep an eye on your child's online activity and be aware of who they are communicating with. Consider using parental control software to help manage and monitor their online behaviour.
4. **Encourage open communication:** Create an environment where your child feels comfortable talking to you about their online experiences. Encourage them to come to you if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe online.
5. **Set a good example:** As parents, we play a vital role in modelling appropriate online behaviour. Be mindful of your own online habits and set a good example for your child to follow.

By following these tips and taking an active role in your child's online activity, you can help ensure their safety and well-being in the digital age.

I appreciate your time and attention in reviewing this important information. Our school places a high priority on collaboration with parents to ensure that each child achieves their full potential and develops the skills necessary for success in today's world. If you have any questions or concerns related to the contents of this email or any aspect of your child's experience at our school, I encourage you to reach out to their designated Head of House in the first instance. They will be happy to discuss the matter with you and, if necessary, refer you to our safeguarding team for further support.

Yours faithfully

Mr J Till
Headteacher

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QR Codes for additional information and resources:

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse#:~:text=Use%20technical%20solutions%20to%20manage,find%20out%20about%20them%20online.

https://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/e-safety/online-safety

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