



## Hunslet Carr Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers of children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6,

# If you only read one **more** letter this year, please read this one.

This is a follow up letter to the internet safety letter from last week.

I don't know if it is because parents and carers checked their child's devices or sat down with them to speak about it, but since the letter went out last week, we have had several parents come to talk to us about what they have found on their child's phone.

They have found that their child is part of Snap Chat, Tik Tok or Whatsapp groups where swear words, racist and homophobic words and inappropriate videos and photos are being made and shared. Not one or two messages, almost all of them.

Some parents and carers have found that there are fake accounts set up in their children's name with a cropped photo used to make them look real, where hateful messages have been posted to make it look as if their child has sent them.

Other parents and carers have found that their child has either been sending hateful messages, getting messages or that they are part of a group where hateful messages are being shared.

On these groups children have been saying some of the worst racist and homophobic language you can think of. They have been calling girls the worst kind of sexist language you can say. We know of three occasions where children in Yr5 or 6 have been asked to share inappropriate photos of themselves online.

Luckily what we have taught those three children and the discussions they must have had with their parents/carers prepared them and they did not share anything, but it was very upsetting.

I am not trying to make you feel more worried than you already were about bringing up a child in the digital / social media age. I just want you to understand the scale of this problem.

Despite everything we do in school; teaching them to safely use social media and getting the police to come and talk to them about how they can be arrested for posting messages that break the law, these hateful messages are still being sent.

We did not teach the children to say racist, homophobic or swear words. Nothing about our school ethos teaches the children that this is OK. Whenever these words are used in our school, children are sanctioned and taught why it is wrong to use these words.

I am not trying to pass this issue off or to sound like I do not want to support any parent or carer who finds horrible messages, photos or videos sent about their child, but if you find out that your child is a victim, **you** should call the **police** and report this **crime**.

Because that is what it is, it is a crime.

It doesn't matter that the person sending the message is 10 or 11 and that they are sending it on a phone. If you or I were to post these messages or to ask someone to send us photos we would be arrested, fined and might possibly lose our jobs.

Telling us about it in school is helpful and means we can continue to try to teach the children the difference between right and wrong, but we can't stop the messages being sent. We do not have control over these children's devices.

If you don't want to report it to the police, report it to the social media platform. Get the people sending your child hateful messages and photos taken offline.

I wish I had a more cheery message for you but unfortunately events over the last week have meant I had to write to you again.

If you have any questions or concerns around Online Safety, please visit our website <https://www.hunsletcarr.co.uk/online-safety.html> where you will find lots of hints and tips to help you keep your children safe.

Kind Regards

Mr Martin Lumb  
Headteacher