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

If you only read one letter this year, please read this one.

This week, in schools across the country, children will be learning how to stay safe on line. It is Internet Safety week (do you remember when it used to just be one day?) and these days keeping children safe online is just as important as keeping them safe in real life.

Before writing this letter, I checked how many behaviour incidents we had at break time and lunchtime over the last five school days in Years 3 - 6. There were 32 incidents reported to teachers and dinner staff.

I then checked how many of these were because children had fallen out the night before on social media or online gaming and 26 of the incidents were because children were carrying over an argument from the night before.

Speaking to other local Headteacher's we are not alone. Children in their KS2 classes are falling out on social media and then bringing those fall outs into school the next day resulting in arguments or fights on the playground.

I know asking you to not let your children go on social media would cause so many difficulties in your home life, but I wanted to make you aware of the scale of the issue and the difficulty we have as a school with dealing with it.

Often, we are being asked to referee arguments that have taken place on mobile phones outside of school. These arguments often involve swear words, racist or homophobic language. They often include clips created on TikTok making fun of another person in the class and this week we have had reports of one or two children being dared to show parts of their body on Facetime.

As a father of a girl in Year 3, I am very worried that she will soon be asking for a phone and then to be allowed SnapChat, TikTok and other apps I am not cool enough to know. She already loves playing on Roblox and is starting to ask whether she can accept friend requests. So, I know how hard it is as a parent or carer when it feels like the internet and social media is everywhere.

So... If we can't turn back the clock to a time where kids don't have phones and SnapChat wasn't a thing... we can at least try and put some rules in place to keep our kids safe. On the other side of this letter are some ideas. I hope they help you feel like you are not alone in trying to do the right thing.

Think u know is always a good place to start – you will see the report abuse button that your child will know about from school.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Primary>

Another site that is helpful for parent controls is **UK Safer Internet Centre**. This site advises you to take four steps:

1. Have ongoing conversations with your children about staying safe online
2. Use safety tools on social networks and other online services, e.g.

Facebook privacy settings

3. Decide if you want to use parental controls on your home internet
4. Understand devices and the parental control tools they offer in our Parents' Guide to Technology

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers>

Digital Parenting is another useful website to look at. There are three areas to think about: **WHO** your child is talking to, **WHAT** they're doing and **WHERE** they're going online.

Digital Parenting also advises you to set "ground rules" by making your own family IT policy. Create your own Family IT policy. Ideas include:

1. Create rules for the amount of time your son or daughter can spend online. It's never too early to start putting limits into place.
2. Choose an appropriate homepage on your family computer or tablet – for example, bbc.co.uk/cbeebies
3. Create rules for where in the house your child can access the internet. A tablet used in the living room where you can see them is much safer than a Playstation/Xbox in their bedroom behind a closed door.
4. Share your technology rules with grandparents, babysitters and older siblings, so that they stick to them when they look after your child or use the family computer.

<http://www.pitda.co.uk>

Talk to your children about the Apps they are using and ask them to show you that they have set the privacy settings to the highest level.

If you allow your children to use Youtube to watch child-friendly content, please turn AutoPlay off. This is because AutoPlay sometimes chooses videos that aren't appropriate for children, even if following a perfectly safe video.

Remember you are the adult and the person whose job it is to keep your child safe so having a rule where at any time you can ask your child to show you their phone, tablet or computer is OK. In fact, it is better than OK it is you doing your job and caring about your child.

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