



The Two Way Street

Welcome to the new issue of Two Way Street. We hope Easter was successful and that you all had a pleasant break.

Re: Internet safety, mobile phones and the use of Social Media.

I know we have covered this subject area before, but it so important in this day and age to keep checking on and educating children to keep them safe on line.

St John's School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet including mobile phones, and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise any concerns we have with you so that we can work collaboratively in tackling them.

For your information (and these are just a few of many!); -



Instagram - an online mobile photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service which enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. You are required to be at least **13 years old** before you can create an account.



Facebook - a social networking site. You are required to be at least **13 years old** before you can create an account.



Messenger - Facebook Messenger is a free mobile messaging app used for instant messaging, sharing photos, videos, audio recordings and for group chats. **Recommended age 13 years.**



Whats App - An instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be **age 16 or older.**

Children are often creating 'groups' to which others are joining. This means that all information is shared with anyone who is in the group so privacy is lost and in one



particular case in school, a stranger was added (albeit it, done innocently, but this just highlights the children's vulnerability).

We understand that it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the ways that our children are using new and ever changing technologies. Our children are immersed in a society that has become dependent on powerful computers, including smart phones, iPads, interactive online games and virtual



communities (what happened to climbing trees and playing football in the park?!) Websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Skype, What's App, and Viber, to name but a few,

offer fantastic opportunities for communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind especially sites such as Facebook and Instagram which are specifically for those over 13 years old. When monitoring your son/daughter's internet use, (and we recommend that you do this after each use) please remind yourself of the concerns of social media:

- Many sites use 'targeted' advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated when they registered.
- The children may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behaviour. The general rule is, if they aren't friends in real life, they shouldn't be 'friends' online.
- Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on social media is NOT moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for children.
- Photographs shared by users are NOT moderated and therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own.
- Social media sites can be exploited by bullies and for inappropriate contact.
- Social media sites cannot and do not verify it's members, therefore, it is important to remember that if your son/daughter can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else.

Primarily, these occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after school hours, when children have access to web sites that are blocked in



school. With this in mind, and in response to concerned parents who have asked for advice regarding internet safety, we feel it important to point out the risks of unregulated use of such sites. You can make informed decisions as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not and when and how to monitor their use, particularly at night time, but we strongly advise a device free bedroom policy after bedtime to allow for uninterrupted sleep and rest.



Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours, please be aware that we often have to deal with issues that spill in to school from home as a result on online gaming/messaging - this takes time away from your child's education!

If, however, as a parent, you do decide to allow your child to have an online profile we strongly advise you to:

- Check their profile is set to private and that only their friends can see information they post.
 - Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting or messaging offensive /inappropriate messages or photo's.
 - Monitor your child's use of language and how they communicate to other people, ensuring profanity is discouraged.
 - Have a look at advice for parents on the social media sites.
 - Set up your own profiles so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as their friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online.
-
- Make sure your son/daughter understand the following rules:
 - o Always keep your profile private.
 - o Never accept friend you do not know in real life.
 - o Never post anything which could reveal your identity including address, phone numbers and even photographs wearing school/club uniforms where possible.
 - o Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents or teachers to see.
 - o Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult.
 - o Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you.



We recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk. www.net-aware.org.uk and www.getsafeonline.org

Through lessons provided at school, assemblies, guest speakers, and PSHE lessons, we do our best to provide our children with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognise and avoid dangers, and be safe online. However, it is only through a collaborative effort between parents and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

Thank you for your support with this matter

Websites for more information:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Visit the "Parent/Carer" Section and use the "Click CEOP" button to seek advice and report online abuse

www.childnet.com - Visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org - Free up-to-date Security advice

<http://clickcleverclicksafe.direct.gov.uk> - Click Clever Click Safe Campaign

www.bbc.co.uk/onlinesafety

www.cybermentors.org.uk - Online support for children

If you have any comments, concerns or questions, call, pop in or drop us an email

Email address:

office@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk

Phone number:

01543 452197

