

Hipsburn Social Media Information for Parents

At Hipsburn we are committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a growing concern, due to the increase in inappropriate use of Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and other messaging sites. Whilst pupils in Key Stage 2 are not allowed access to their mobile phones and portable devices during the school day, we may increasingly need to intervene at school in friendship problems that have risen outside of school due to the pupils' misuse of technology.

The issues may involve the use of:

- 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.**
- 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 some cases strangers have been added to the group.**
- **Snapchat** - an image messaging and multimedia mobile application. **You are required to be at least 13 to create an account or use the services.**

We understand that it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the ways that children are using new and ever changing technologies. Our children are immersed in a society that has become dependent on powerful computers, including Smartphones, iPads, interactive online games and virtual communities. Websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Skype, Whats App, Viber and OoVoo, to name but a few, offer fantastic opportunities for communication and social connections. However, we are increasingly finding that younger children (as we are seeing in school) tend not to have the maturity to handle these sites appropriately. These occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, or after school hours when children have access to websites that are blocked in school and when they do not have access to their phones. With this in mind, we feel it important to point out to parents the risks of unregulated use of such sites, so 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. 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, as this is parental responsibility, we will take action if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our pupils.

Should you decide to allow your child to have an online profile we strongly advise you:

- 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 sending/posting offensive /inappropriate messages or photographs.
- Monitor your child's use of language and how they communicate to other people, ensuring hurtful language 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.

We would encourage parents to make sure your son/daughter understand the following rules:

- Always keep their profile private.
- Never accept friends they do not know in real life.
- Never post anything which could reveal their identity including photographs wearing school uniform where possible.
- Never post anything they wouldn't want their parents or teachers to see.
- Never agree to meet somebody they only know online without telling a trusted adult.
- Always tell someone if they feel threatened or someone upsets them.

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.

Other useful websites include: www.net-aware.org.uk and www.getsafeonline.org

Through lessons provided at school, assemblies, guest speakers, and P.S.H.E.

lessons, we do our best to provide our children with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognise and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful behaviour and to respond appropriately. However, it is only through a collaborative effort between parents and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

If you would like to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher at school.