Shanklea Primary School

SPS

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Online Safety Important Information

Over the last few weeks Shanklea staff have become increasingly aware of the online activity of some pupils. Whilst online activity is part of modern life we feel it has become necessary to share our concerns with you as parents. We know that most of our pupils are fully aware of the issues surrounding online safety and the need to ensure they protect themselves with privacy settings: however discussions with older children indicate that they are not all applying their knowledge in practice.

Sharing of images

Increasingly, young children are using phones and tablets to create photos and videos and share them online. Whilst this can be fun, sharing images can also be risky.

It is important that your child understands what is acceptable to share and what they should discuss with you first.

What are the risks?

- Once an image has been shared, you can never be sure who has seen it, saved it or shared it.

- Personal or embarrassing pictures in the wrong hands can lead to bullying.

- Knowing that others have seen embarrassing images can cause stress and anxiety and affect a child's confidence and self-esteem.

- Unwanted pictures online could affect educational and job opportunities later in life.

- Sharing images, particularly sexualised images, can increase the likelihood of a child receiving inappropriate sexual contact from strangers online.

We are aware that some children are sharing their personal photos on different apps such as **Snapchat, Instagram, Musically** – all of which have differing security features.

Group Chats

Many of our pupils also participate in group chats with their friends. These chats are a feature of many of the most popular apps. Sites that allow anonymity, or content that appears to disappear, reduce inhibitions. Children and young people who would not be cruel face-to-face, and who do not see the consequences of their actions, may feel justified saying hurtful things online. We would ask you to discuss with your children the need to stop and think before they post or share something on the internet – about the potential impact for others and for themselves of what they might write in haste or on the spur of the moment.

Speaking to different pupils it is clear they see group chats as private if they are a group of friends; however on some platforms it is possible for any member of the group to add whoever

they wish and past comments would still be available for them to see. In this way no one person can control who sees a group chat.

At present there are a number of social media features which encourage children to identify and name other children in response to unkind and derogatory questions. These can have a severe and detrimental effect on the identified child's self esteem.

As a result of these concerns we are undertaking a series of hard-hitting lessons with the pupils which will explain both the emotional and legal implications of their actions. As part of this we will ask them to share with you the apps they currently are using and what they are doing to ensure their own safety. We hope this will enable you to undertake a frank discussion with them.

We are only too aware at the speed at which activity on the internet changes and how difficult it is to remain up-to-date with the apps etc. If you do have questions or concerns about your child or any other child's activity please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to support you in whatever way we can. Alternatively you can go online for support

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Concerned-about-your-child/

Wednesday 21st February 2018