

February 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

On 26 January the BBC broadcast a documentary entitled "*Murder Games: The Life and Death of Breck Bednar*". Breck was a 14 year old boy who was lured to his death after being groomed online while gaming ie playing games with others over the Internet. Some of you may have heard Breck's mother being interviewed by Vanessa Feltz on The Jeremy Vine show over the break. [Click here](#) to access the documentary which is available on BBC iPlayer until 3 March 2016.

In January, Breck's mother also gave an interview to the Guardian newspaper in which she talked about all the actions she had taken to try to ensure her son's safety, as well as how the grooming and alienation of her son from her by his predator took place. [Click here](#) to read the Guardian interview.

At our recent Year 7 Parents' Evening, I took the opportunity to ask parents about the controls they had on their daughters' computers and mobile devices, as well as whether they allowed them to have technology in their bedrooms. Responses were varied, with some parents taking these issues very seriously:

- Filters on Internet access on all of their children's devices
- Logins to, or 'friends' with their daughter on all social media accounts
- Following professional advice by ensuring that all technology is left downstairs overnight

Others were not sure about whether they had parental controls on children's devices, and some said they 'trusted their daughter' so did not feel the need to put such measures in place.

To support you in helping to keep your children safe online, I also attach a copy of our school e-Safety guidance for parents, which not only suggests ways to minimise risk, but also provides valuable advice about what to do if you are concerned about your daughter and her 'online life'.

Finally, the detrimental effect of having technology in their bedroom on young people's sleep, and potentially their mental and physical health and well-being, is becoming increasingly well-documented. [Click here](#) to read an article about this by Dr Craig Canapari, the Director of 'The Yale Pediatric Sleep Center', which also contains some interesting links and downloads to help you develop a greater understanding of the potential problems.

Whilst we do appreciate that the Internet can provide fabulous resources and communication tools, I thought I would take the opportunity, part way through the year, to remind parents about the importance of taking steps to ensure your children are safe online ... October, and the next episode of 'fright night', are still a long time away!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Cindi Pride
Deputy Headteacher