

Dear Parent

This is a letter of information regarding the work that we are doing in school to protect children when they use the internet. Through PSHCE lessons we have followed a programme devised by CEOP- the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre, in alliance with the government and with Leicestershire Constabulary. In order to provide the training at a suitable level and with the right amount of support for the pupils, we ourselves have both been trained by CEOP.

The aim of the training is to make pupils fully aware of the risks they take when they engage in interactive games, friendship groups or chat rooms on the internet. A key issue is to show the pupils that they do not know the people that they meet online, however friendly they may seem. The key messages that we put across are that pupils must never give out their personal contact details to a stranger (or someone they perceive to be a friend) that they have met online, and that they must NEVER arrange to meet someone that they have met online unless they take an adult with them and meet in a public place. It has been a surprise to us, whilst carrying out this crucial training, just how naïve the pupils are, and how much personal information they feel is safe to give out on the internet.

Part of the training explains clearly to pupils that any situation which makes them feel nervous or uncomfortable is wrong, and that it is never too late to terminate a conversation or arrangement that has been made through a chat room or other social networking site. CEOP has established a website to help pupils understand the dangers of the internet, and to help them have safe fun online. It includes a link for young people to be able to report in complete confidence any person/s who have made inappropriate advances to them online. The link to the website is www.thinkuknow.co.uk and this link can be found on the home page of the school website.

We feel that this safety training has been an extremely valuable exercise, and one that will be continued as part of our PSHCE programme. We have also delivered the message through staff training in order to heighten staff awareness, and in order that staff can support any student who feels they have taken risks online, and who may wish to talk to a member of staff about their concerns.

CEOP also encourages schools to train parents in e-safety. The 'thinkuknow' website has an excellent section for parents which explains clearly the dangers of the internet and more importantly shows parents how to make their children's internet access much safer through simple measures, such as checking who your child has in their friendship list on Facebook etc, to ensure that there are no any adults that you, as parents, do not know on it.

It is also vital to check that your child has a high level of security on their social networking accounts in order that only people they know can look at their photographs; a surprising number of our pupils did not have this when we asked them.

We strongly urge all parents to take the time to look at the parents' section on the 'thinkuknow' website, and do hope that you find the information located there to be as useful as we have. If you have any concerns or questions about this issue please do not hesitate to contact either of us at school.

Yours sincerely

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Child Protection Officer

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Head of PSHCE