Dear parents/ carers

Over recent days, we have had issues between some of our Year 5 pupils online. As this has happened, it is an ideal time to remind you as parents – and the children in school – about our expectations of the children's conduct online.

Social media platforms all have a minimum age limit. This minimum age limit is always over primary school age – for example, WhatsApp is 16; Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are 13. We fully understand that parents will make the decisions about whether your own child will have access but it important they understand how to act online as part of the responsibility that comes with access to social media.

The issue we have that most often comes into school from social media/ messaging is when children are unkind and say things online that they would not say in real life.

Please talk to your child about the way they are conducting themselves online and if this is how they should be. I would expect parents to be reviewing their children's conduct on social media regularly – especially on group messages as this is where the majority of issues occur.

Last year's anti-bullying week focus was 'Reach Out' and the message was clear that if you have issues with any form of bullying – online or in person – that you should reach out for support rather than bottling up any worries. We are here to support if your child does have issues online so encourage them to reach out to us as well as yourselves.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this.

Best wishes

Mr Lobb

Some advice for parents about internet usage:

- Create a culture of sharing at home so it becomes just part of home life that parents are interested in what their children are doing on the computer/internet.
- Remind children that if wouldn't normally do it in the real world then it's not acceptable in the virtual world either.
- Put time restrictions on children's computer/internet use.
- Set preferences to Google Strict Search for Google Images.
- A friend online is not the same as a friend in real life.

Tower View Primary School
Vancouver Drive, Winshill, Burton-on-Trent. DE15 0EZ
office@towerview.staffs.sch.uk
www.towerview.staffs.sch.uk

- Take an interest in your children's online friends, just as you would do with their friends in real life.
- Internet Safety is about behaviour and not ICT, just as Road Safety is about behaviour around roads and not about the traffic which drives on them.

Don't go home and unplug the internet! Remember the internet is a brilliant resource but it does reflect the best and worst of human nature. We cannot eliminate every risk to children but we can minimise the risks to an extent that children remain as safe as possible – again very similar to road safety.

Key support contacts:

CEOP Safety Centre

CEOP Education (thinkuknow.co.uk)

Keeping children safe | NSPCC

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