

☎ 206585
27 May 2016



Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Internet safety and the use of Social Media

Bowhill Primary School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to bring your attention to concerns about the use of Skype, Instagram, Facebook and other texting sites. Reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after school hours when children have access to web sites that are blocked in school. With this in mind, we feel it is 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 during evenings and weekends.

Issues that have been brought to our attention recently have involved the use of:

- Skype - video and messaging app. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.
- Instagram - 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 - social networking site. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.
- Whats App – 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, children may not know who has been added to the group.

Despite the age restrictions, we recognise that our children have internet access and social media so through lessons provided at school, assemblies, and PSHE lessons, we do our best to provide our children with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognise and avoid unsafe 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.

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

Make sure your son/daughter understand the following rules:

- Always keep your profile private.
- Never accept friend you do not know in real life. Never post anything which could reveal your identity including photographs wearing school uniform where possible.
- Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents or teachers to see.
- Never agree to meet somebody you only know online.
- Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you.

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 www.net-aware.org.uk and www.getsafeonline.org

Miss C Brooks
Headteacher