

**BOLNEY C.E.P. SCHOOL**

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**Headteacher: Mrs Lorraine Kenny, BEd Hons, NPQH**

Monday, 06 February 2017

**The use of social media sites and texts**

Dear parents and carers of children in Key Stage 2

There have been a couple of incidents recently involving children at our school when they have become very upset following messages sent using mobile phones. On talking with the children it seems that many of them have mobile phones and use social media sites like Instagram and Snapchat as well as sending text messages.

Sites like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Pinterest do have an age restriction of 13+ years. We are aware that use of these sites is the parent’s responsibility and so would like to provide some guidance for you.

There are many reasons why these sites are restricted to over 13 years of age, these include:

* **Children’s personal information being at risk.** Operators of sites collect personal information, there are protections around the collection of data but if a 9-year-old claims they are 13 they may not be protected.
* **Children under 13 are yet to develop their thinking to make smart decisions online.** Research shows that it takes children about 12 years to fully develop the cognitive structures that enable them to engage in ethical thinking.

**Please talk with your child regularly about online safety and its importance.**

**Make sure you know what they are doing on their phones and online.**

**Ensure they know to share with you anything that doesn’t feel or look right.**

Please help your child to understand that whatever they write in a message they should be able to say out loud to the same person.

It is important that we work together to keep the children safe. At school, through lessons and instilling our values, we help children understand about: how to keep safe online, digital literacy and treating others fairly and with respect.

**Workshops for children and parents**

We have arranged for an online safety specialist to deliver some workshops on **Tuesday 28th February**. There will be one for the children in the afternoon and one for parents and staff after school. We will arrange for children to stay with a member of staff if you cannot arrange child care, though places for this will be limited. Further details will be sent shortly.

February 7th is Safer Internet Day; we will be taking part in activities to promote this.

Here are some websites that provide excellent guidance.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

We understand that some children need to bring a mobile phone to school if they are travelling to and from school without an adult. If this is the case, the phone must be kept in the school office for safe keeping during the school day.

We hope that this helps you with supporting the children with this constantly changing world!

Please do speak with us if you have any queries or concerns.

Kind regards,

Mrs Lorraine Kenny

Headteacher