

23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: Online Safety**

Online safety is very important to us at Wychall Primary School and it is therefore vital for us that you are not only alerted to the behaviours being displayed by some pupils but also to the **dangers** of online gaming and the influence that these games have on your child's reality.

It has become apparent over the duration of this half term that a large number of pupils have been actively engaging in video-game inspired play, inappropriate conversations relating to online gaming/videos and in some cases, accessing and engaging with apps of which are not age appropriate.

**Online safety and Child Abuse**

The definition of abuse is as follows:

“Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. **Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.** Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children”

– *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*

**What does Online Abuse look like?**

- *Name calling between peers (bullying)*
- *Sexual exploitation and abuse (sexualised language, images, videos)*
- *Inappropriate language (swearing, making threats)*
- *Adults or other children directing children to steal, exploit or bully others*
- *Adults posing as children with sinister intent to abuse or exploit*

**How can online usage Impact on Children's Behaviour?**

- Affect child's sleep
- Interfere with routines i.e. mealtimes/bedtime
- Alter child's mood – can provoke anger, violence, frustration
- Child can become withdrawn
- Child could have an increased confidence
- Child may start to talk about new 'friends'
- Child may get upset at the prospect of giving up the game, video or app
- Child's behaviour at school may decline
- Child's academic progress may be limited

With this in mind, Online Safety is an aspect of safeguarding that Wychall Primary School takes very seriously. We therefore actively promote and reinforce the age limits of games, videos and apps all with the pupil's safety and wellbeing in mind. We would therefore appreciate parental support in enforcing this at home.

**Age Restraints:**

All of the apps and games that children are playing do have a recommended age range.

- Tik Tok - 13 years
- Snapchat - 13 years
- Facebook - 13 years
- Instagram - 13 years
- Whatsapp - 16 (*previously 13 years*)
- Fortnite - PEGI 12 Years
- Grand Theft Auto - M for 'Mature Players' rated 18+

Please see below some recommendations for assisting in keeping your child safe online:

- Reduce screen time
- Speak to your children about what they are doing and who they are talking to online
- Create and implement rules and boundaries relating to online gaming/videos
- Be aware of who your children are engaging with online
- Be aware of the tone of conversations that are being had
- Monitor games and websites prior to allowing your child free access
- Adhere to the age constraints outlined on apps and games

We hope that these recommendations assist in supporting you to support your child's wellbeing online. Meanwhile, we will continue to implement our behaviour policy accordingly and any instances of inappropriate behaviour will be referred directly to the head teacher.

Should you require any further information on E-Safety or have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours truly,

Hayley Eaton  
**Safeguarding Lead**