



1st February 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Social Media and keeping your child safe - Key information for parents/carers

As part of Safer Internet Week, all children at Southway have recently been learning about e-safety and the best ways in which to use the internet safely and confidently. Many of our pupils have Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media profiles even though the recommended minimum age to use these sites is 13 years old, according to their terms and conditions.

Southway Junior School is committed to keeping our children safe and to promote the safe, responsible use of the internet. As such, we feel it is our responsibility to extend this conversation to parents and carers.

1. Individual profile problems

- Ensure that social media profiles are set to 'private' in order to prevent unknown users being able to view their profile.
- Children should not post pictures of themselves (or others) in school uniform; this is easily identifiable and means people can work out where they will be in real life.
- Check the content children are posting on their page for inappropriate language and/or images.

2. General social networking issues

Websites such as Facebook offer amazing communication and social connections - however, they are created with their audience in mind and this is specifically over 13 years old. Possible risks for children under 13 using the site may include:

- Facebook use "age targeted" advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated they were when they registered.
- Children may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life, which could increase the risk of inappropriate or dangerous contact or behaviour
- Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on Facebook is not moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for children.
- Photographs shared by users are not moderated and therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own.
- Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities private and lying about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options
- Facebook could be exploited by bullies and for other inappropriate contact.
- Facebook cannot and does not verify its members; therefore it is important to remember that if your child can lie about their age and who they are online, so can anyone else!

3. Gaming

Many of our pupils enjoy gaming on Playstation, Xbox, other consoles or tablets. Please be aware that all games come with age (PEGI) ratings, which are put in place to protect children from violence, bad language and other inappropriate content. Safety tips include:

- Use PEGI ratings to inform your choice about whether a game is appropriate. If possible, watch some of the content on YouTube to see if you feel it is suitable for your child.
- Keep consoles and tablets in the living room or other areas where you can easily monitor what is happening.

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- If games allow online play, ensure that children are communicating with people they know. Open chatrooms or online matches should not be used to exchange personal information.

4. Parental responsibility

We feel it is important to point out to parents the risks of underage use of such sites, so you can make an informed decision as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not at the moment. Should you decide to allow your child of any age to have a Facebook profile we strongly advise you to:

- Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting offensive messages or photos
- Ask them to install the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) application from www.facebook.com/clickceop on their profile. This places a bookmark on their profile to CEOP and the Report Abuse button which has been known to deter offenders
- Have a look at the advice for parents/carers from Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/parents/>
- Set up your own profile so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as a friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online
- Make sure your child understands and are the following basic e-safety rules that we have learnt about at school.
- We also recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online (www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

5. School support and action

Southway Junior School takes e-Safety very seriously, and we discuss e-Safety issues throughout the year with our pupils. We are considering running a workshop for parents to discuss e-Safety issues and receive advice. If you are interested in attending, please complete and return the slip below and return it to the school office by Friday 9th February. If you feel that you or your child need further support in keeping your child safe on the internet, please contact the school office via parentline@southwayjunior.co.uk

With thanks for your continued support.

Miss C Steer
Computing Co-Ordinator

e-Safety workshop – return by Friday 9th February

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

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I would be interested in attending an e-Safety workshop

Parents signature: _____ Date: _____

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