



Garlinge Primary School and Nursery

January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! **Monitoring Social Media Messaging Platforms**

We have recently been dealing with an increasing number of issues arising from children using social media messaging platforms. As ever, technology develops at a rapid rate, so monitoring your child's usage is essential. It is a real challenge as a parent to keep up to date with these changes and children are often one step ahead of us.

As a school, we are expected to ensure that online safety has a high profile both within the curriculum and by sharing information with parents. The critical question is "Do you know exactly what your child is doing online or on their phone?" and the challenge is "How best do I monitor this?"

What is the impact on the children?

If children are not using social media platforms appropriately, this can have an adverse effect on their social emotional mental health. Recently there have been a number of reported incidents in school that have happened directly as a result of comments posted on social media messaging platforms. These issues take a large amount of time to investigate and resolve. This inevitably impacts on our children's mental health and their learning. As a school we have a no phone policy so it is impossible for us to prevent this as social media messaging platforms are only used out of school hours when the children are at home.

As part of online safety guidance, we have discussed with the older KS2 children the fact that, over the past few years there have been a number of 'celebrities' and important figures who have lost jobs/roles due to unkind words posted when they were younger. Teaching your child only to write something they would happily say in front of you or the person themselves, is a good stepping stone.

If your child accesses social media messaging platforms, I ask you to closely monitor what they have written and received. As adults, it is important that we guide and control what the children are exposed to. We cannot do this alone, as a school; we need you, parents and carers, to be active partners to ensure that the children are safe online.

The following links provide information about how you can support your child to use the internet and social media messaging platforms responsibly:

www.childnet.com

www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety

www.familylives.org.uk

www.vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting

If you have any concerns regarding your child's usage of social media messaging platforms please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Mansfield our Safeguarding Officer.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Northrop
Deputy Headteacher