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Dear Parent/Carer

8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Re: Online Safety Day

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 saw us focussing on Online Safety across the whole school in recognition of National Online Safety Day. Lots of activities took place across the Learning Zones which addressed issues ranging from: designing safe passwords; cyber bullying; fake news and how to keep yourself safe whilst online. A particular focus was where you can get help and advice if you find something inappropriate online and what you should do about it.

Our Year 6 children also had an online safety workshop delivered by Durham Police.

Throughout the day, staff and Durham Police were really concerned to hear from children just how much access they have to social media, especially platforms they are legally underage to have access to. Durham Police have asked me to share with you the legal age required for some of the more popular platforms:

Platform	Minimum Legal Age
You Tube Accounts	It is illegal for children under 13 years of age to have a You Tube account. Children aged between 13 and 17 can only open an account with parental permissions.
Instagram	13 years of age and requires age verification to be provided.
Tik Tok	13 years of age but there are no age verification checks so it is very easy for younger children to access illegally.

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Snapchat	13 years of age and age verification is very limited so again it is easy to access illegally.
Facebook	You must be 13 years old to create an account.

In theory, none of our children should be using these platforms, however, the reality is very different with the majority of children in Key Stage Two using one or more of the platforms and at least half the children in Key Stage One using them too. Some children have their own accounts and others are accessing using a parent account. More worryingly, some children have reported accessing online information without their parents/carers knowledge.

There are many positive benefits to the internet and social media, however, there are also a huge range of dangers too. I am sure you will have seen the tragic murder of Brienne in the news this week. Her mum is campaigning for improved security around children accessing social media including the introduction of 'child only' phones for under 16's and the introduction of notification software to link a parent phone to a child phone. The new National Online Safety Bill is currently working its way through Parliament but it is anticipated that this will lead to a tightening of monitoring and access for children.

Although we offered an Online Safety Briefing for parents/carers by Durham Police, it was only attended by one parent.

Durham Police have agreed to provide a Powerpoint presentation for us to share on our website for parents/carers and the link below provides some excellent resources, advice and support too:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

Feedback from teaching staff in Primary Schools suggests that despite us teaching online safety across the curriculum (in Computing & Character Development lessons etc) children in primary schools do know the right thing to do and can articulate this well but lack the emotional maturity to apply what they know in the moment when they are online.

Durham Police's top tip is for parents to check their child's phone and other devices on a regular basis and to ensure that parental controls are in place where children are accessing online information.

As soon as the presentation is available on our website I will let you know but in the meantime if you have any concerns, questions or need support please speak to your child's Class Teacher; our Computing Lead – Mr Clarke or myself.

Yours sincerely

*Mrs D Cross*

Mrs D Cross  
Head Teacher

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