

Tuesday 16th July 2019

Important Information: Online Safety at Galley Common Infant School

Dear Parents,

It is with disappointment that I have to inform you that there have been some reported breaches of our Online Safety policy whereby parents have posted photographs and videos of children at our school on social media recently, and therefore putting our children at risk.

PC1942 Stephen Harvey of Warwickshire police would like to remind our families of the following:

“These sorts of images can be used to gather personal information such as school, location, a child's full name, or even dates of birth to paint a picture of who they are. Parents, older siblings, or guardians also need to think about the emotional risks as they build a "digital identity" of their children online, often without children's consent. Children and young people may feel worried and anxious when their parents (and others) upload private pictures of them online. Think twice before posting - Could this post prove embarrassing for my child when they're older? Could this comment be taken out of context? If in doubt, don't share!

Once a picture is online, it can be tough to control where it can be seen and how it is used - despite being careful with privacy settings. Most infant and primary school social media policies have a number of purposes, but their overriding function is to protect staff, students and parents from the many issues that can arise as a result of posting on social networking sites. Parents may become involved in online disputes with other parents through social media. They may also potentially put their child and others within the school at risk by sharing photos, videos or other information that could make the children identifiable to others.

Schools can take their own action if a member of staff, parent or pupil breaches its policy. As far as parents are concerned, infringing a rule such as posting photos including other pupils is likely to mean that they're contacted by the school and asked to remove the content. If parents continue to break the rules, schools may ultimately ban cameras, phones and videos from school events. This may seem an extreme move - especially if the parents of other children are happy to have photos posted on sites such as Facebook - but in some cases, identifying a child who is the subject of safeguarding (e.g. a child who has been adopted or fostered, or who has an injunction against a family member; or whose identity the Police wish to be kept to a minimum) could put them at risk. This means it's essential that schools uphold their policies through whatever appropriate means.”

In terms of our school Online Safety policy and actions, should a breach occur, I would like to remind you of the following:

1. For the safety of all children at school we request that you **do not publish photos and videos of the children on social media**. This does not prevent you from sharing photos privately. What it does do is protect **ALL** children, including your child.
2. The school may **exclude parents from events** in school where their posts are not taken down, upon request, or there are further breaches whereby their actions are putting their child or that of other children at risk.
3. If this online behaviour continues we will no longer be able to allow families to take photos or videos at events. Whilst this is something we would like to avoid, as we understand that the first years of your child's schooling are precious, the children's safety and welfare must be a priority.

There are ways in which you can support the school. For example, if you see a photo or video of your child on social media, you can report it and have it removed. An example, by following the link on Facebook below:

https://m.facebook.com/help/428478523862899?helpref=faq_content

<https://m.facebook.com/help/contact/144059062408922>

These links can also be found on our school Facebook page.

PC1942 Stephen Harvey has also offered links for you to follow should you require any further information. We will add these links to our Facebook page over the next few days.

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

https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/social-networking-how-to-guides-for-parents/?utm_source=bt&utm_medium=gen&utm_campaign=bau_sharenting

<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

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

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for your understanding. Following our school policy is to protect you, your children, other children, the school and even the wider community. School has managed to allow parents to take photos for so long, because of the way that the policy has been adhered to in the past; it would be a real shame if we have to review our policy.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of the school and our Online Safety policy in keeping all of our children safe.

Yours sincerely,

K Middleton

Head Teacher

Galley Common Infant School