

Friday 6th January 2023,

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

A very Happy New Year to everyone.

At Hodge Hill Primary, we take the safety and well-being of our children, adults and community very seriously. This includes the safety of our community when accessing online material.

An incredibly important piece of legislation - **the Online Safety Bill** - is currently working its way through Parliament. At its heart is the protection of children. The Secretary of State for Education has sent schools more information about this piece of law, which we wanted to share with you.

Under this Bill, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and other social media companies will finally be held legally responsible for the content on their sites. They will be forced to protect their users, or face billion-pound fines and the potential blocking of their sites in the UK.

The strongest protections in this legislation are for children and young people. This Bill will protect them by:

- removing illegal content, including child sexual abuse and terrorist content
- protecting children from harmful and inappropriate content, from cyberbullying and pornography to posts that encourage eating disorders or depict violence
- putting legal duties on social media companies to enforce their own age limits - which for almost every single platform are set at age 13, and yet are rarely enforced
- making tech companies use age checking measures to protect children from inappropriate content
- making posts that encourage self-harm illegal for the first time - both for children and adults
- ensuring more transparency on the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest platforms, including by make tech companies publish risk assessments

Adults will be covered by their own separate 'triple shield' of defence. You will be protected from posts that are illegal; from content that is prohibited by the social media companies in their own terms and conditions; and you will be given more control over the content you see on your own social media feeds.

We know how worrying it can be as a parent or guardian trying to protect your child online, when you cannot always see who they are talking to or what sites or apps they are visiting.

The onus for keeping young people safe online will sit squarely on the tech companies' shoulders. You or your child will not have to change any settings or apply any filters to shield them from harmful content. Social media companies and their executives in Silicon Valley will have to build these protections into their platforms - and if they fail in their responsibilities, they will face severe legal consequences.

...putting children at the heart of all we think, say and do



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The Bill will not just shield younger users from illegal content but also protect them from material that is not strictly illegal or banned by platforms, but that can cause serious trauma nevertheless. This is very positive news from the Government, and we wanted our community to be aware.

If you would like to find out more information on how to keep your child/children/young person safe, please see the links below.

If you are ever worried or concerned about your child/children/young person accessing content online, please do speak to a member of staff.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-the-online-safety-bill>

<https://www.gov.uk/society-and-culture/online-safety>

Yours sincerely,

Miss Evans
Safeguarding Manager

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