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SOCIAL MEDIA - Important message about children's safe use and parental responsibility

We have an increasing number of parents raising concerns about children's inappropriate use of mobile phones and other forms of social media messaging and usage.

When used correctly, social media has many benefits. When used incorrectly, social media can cause upset and anxiety for adults and for children. Research says that children can be affected in many ways – they feel unhappy, vulnerable, left out, bullied, can't sleep and lose confidence.

Incorrect or inappropriate use of social media is a real concern for us all and it is something we want to protect our children from. We talk about e-safety regularly in school and we follow several units of learning specifically designed to teach children about the importance of correct online behaviour. We always listen to parents when they bring concerns of this nature to our attention but outside of school, it is very difficult for us to control what happens. **As parents, you will know the importance of your responsibility in managing and monitoring your child's usage of the internet.**

Many sites have age restrictions; eg facebook, youtube, Instagram, snap chat, musical.ly - this is to prohibit and ultimately safeguard primary school children from having their own authorised use.

Often peer pressure persuades children that they must have a mobile phone "because everyone else has" OR to join a social network group. This pressure can equally persuade parents to buy children a mobile phone for their child or children. OR to overlook age restrictions on sites. As parents it is entirely appropriate to say "no". If your child does have a phone (or iPad or tablet or lap top) some simple but important safeguarding messages are:

- Set guidelines for when your child has use of their phone or device and what they can use it for
- Check usage and messages for appropriateness
- Restrict access to certain sites
- Age restrictions are there to protect and safeguard children, check, and if in doubt say no!
- Keep phones downstairs and not in bedrooms
- Remove the privilege of a phone or device if it is used inappropriately
- Remind children that digital media leaves a digital footprint; this means that messages and images are stored and are traceable. Think what you say and post
- If you have concerns about what other children are posting into group chats, remove your child from the chats for their protection
- Ensure children know that they should tell an adult about anything that worries them, whether this is inappropriate messages, unkindness from others, people joining group chats that they don't know

Further advice can be found under the 'Parents' tab on our website.