Dear Parents and Carers, welcome to October’s Safeguarding letter

**We have put together tips for keeping your child safe online and at Halloween and Bonfire Night**

**Should our children use Snapchat or Discord?**

No one under the age of 13 is allowed to use the app but we all know that kids can get onto it easily enough and Discord allows access to very sketchy chat topics including drugs, stolen Identities and Blackhat hacking However children who use Snapchat should be mature enough to verify the contacts they add and recognise the dangers of some of these subjects **If your child is unable to do this we recommend that they do not use either .**

**Connecting with strangers**

It’s simple to find and add “friends” on Snapchat and end up with a large list of contacts that you don’t actually know . If children are sharing their lives through the app, there is a danger of oversharing with strangers and potentially receiving unpleasant attention. There is also a significant amount of sexualised material easily accessed by children.

The app allows users to share their location on **snap map** which can include detailed information right down to house number. Any location sharing information can be risky and parents should talk to children about the dangers.

**“Disappearing” snaps**

Everything users post on Snapchat disappears doesn’t it? Disappearing content can lead to a false sense of security, causing users to post explicit, hurtful or otherwise damaging content they wouldn’t otherwise do. As with everything on the internet, it can come back to haunt later in life and snaps and stories can be screen-captured or recorded by other users. Parents should make sure kids understand that Snapchat isn’t safe at all.

**How to make Snapchat safer for your child.**

If you have decided that your child is ready for an account, you should take the time to adjust their privacy settings.Tap the gear icon next to their profile and you can control who can see their content, send messages and add them as a friend. Parents should also update their child’s location sharing settings to “ghost mode” so that no one can see where they are on the snap map.

**Halloween and Bonfire Night**

We hope that our children will have lots of frights and fun this Halloween and that Bonfire Night is a blast 😊

Please make sure that they know that they do not go into a stranger’s house for treats, that they go around in a group and preferably with an adult in tow standing at the gate with an agreed ‘return home time’ and that they have a fully charged phone with your number on it – zipped up in a pocket- should they need to get hold of you quickly and to attend a professionally run bonfire if not attending one at home. Please take a minute to remind them of the safety rules around fireworks to help keep themselves safe.

Kind Regards

Andrew Grant -DSL

**Halloween , Bonfire Night , Discord and Snapchat**