



Dear Parent/Carer

15th December 2011

I am writing to inform you that we have recently become aware of issues in relation to the online safety of children and young people within Kent and the wider area. This serves as an opportunity for us to remind all children and young people about being safe online as many may receive mobile phones, games consoles and laptops as Christmas gifts.

e-Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Burham CE Primary School. e-Safety is taught to all pupils which explains and demonstrates how to stay safe and behave appropriately online but we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you. Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they can keep themselves safe and behave appropriately online. It's important that we are all vigilant when children are using the internet and act to ensure they are protected from people who may pose a risk to them. Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to illegal, unwanted or unpleasant content, comments or activity online and there are steps you can take at home to minimise this risk.

What can parents/carers do? Follow the Golden Rules

Ground Rules

- Discuss as a family how the internet will be used in your house. Consider what information should be kept private (such as personal information, photos etc) and decide rules for making and meeting online friends. Make sure you know what your child is doing online much like you would offline.
- Discuss using strong passwords with your child so they understand how they can protect their online accounts. It's important they know they need to keep their passwords safe and not share them with anyone or use the same password for several accounts. If your child's account is "hacked" or compromised then make sure they change their password and report any concerns or suspicious activity. Check how secure your passwords are here: <http://howsecureismypassword.net/>. For more advice on using strong passwords visit <http://tinyurl.com/Getssafeonlinepassword>

Online Safety

- Install antivirus software, secure your internet connection and use Parental Control functions for computers, mobile phones and games consoles to block unsuitable content or contact. Always remember that parental control tools are not always 100% effective and sometimes unsuitable content can get past them, so don't rely on them alone to protect your child.

Location

- Consider locating your computers and laptops in a family area where children's online activity can be monitored or supervised. Always supervise the use of webcams and any applications or devices which allow voice or video chat. Also consider the use and location of other devices your child's uses which allow internet access such as mobile phones and games consoles. Visit www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide for safety information about consoles and devices

Dialogue

- Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together with your child can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.
- Always ensure your child knows how to block and report people online who may send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply and to keep any evidence.
- Make sure your child knows it's important that they tell an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable.
- It's essential to be realistic: banning the internet or web sites often will not work and it can make a child feel less able to report a problem or concern, so education around safe use is essential.

Websites to visit for more information:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the "Parent/Carer" Section and use the "Click CEOP" button to seek advice and report online abuse
www.childnet.com – Visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety
www.getssafeonline.org – Free up-to-date Security advice including using complex passwords and managing hacked accounts
www.kent.police.uk/internetsafety - Guidance from Kent Police
www.kent.gov.uk/esafety - Guidance from Kent County Council

The School e-Safety Coordinator (Miss Hillman) or Designated Child Protection Coordinator (Miss Grima-) are available to discuss any help you may need or concerns that you may have.

If you are worried that your child is at risk of harm or criminal offence has been committed then you can report your concerns using one of the following contacts.

Children's Social Care: 08458 247247

Kent Police: 101

CEOP: Visit www.ceop.police.uk and use the "Click CEOP" reporting button

Yours sincerely

Michelle Grima