



July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: E-Safety Advice

Technology, the internet, and social media have become a big part of all of our lives. During the lockdown period, the use of social media has increased rapidly and I wanted to share with you some information about a social media trend that regrettably seems to be reaching some children.

Over the past several years, a common trend on social media or through text messaging is to pose a 'challenge' to the viewer of the video or reader of the text message. On occasion, these challenges can raise funds for charity like the 'ice bucket challenge' that was popular some years ago. There are however, those who choose to create and post 'challenges' that can be dangerous and physically harmful. There have been news stories recently about these videos circulating that ask the viewer to perform acts of violence to others or to themselves. This is very distressing, especially to know that children as young as primary age are being exposed to this type of disturbing behaviour.

I am sharing this information with you not to cause alarm or panic but to communicate information that may be helpful to you as parents. I would also like to pass along a few simple tips that all parents can use when helping children safely navigate the internet and social media.

Basic guidelines for parental supervision:

- Spend time online together to teach your child appropriate online behaviour.
- Keep the computer in a common area where you can watch and monitor its use, not in individual bedrooms.
- Monitor any time spent on smartphones or tablets.
- Talk to your child around their social media use, their 'followers' or 'friends'.
- Check your credit card and phone bills for unfamiliar account charges.
- Take your child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.

As a parent or carer it is hugely important that you know what your child is doing on their phone. As well as talking to your child regularly about their phone use, it's important to consider setting controls on their phone or tablet, or on any devices that you let them use within your household. You can enable restrictions to stop your child from using specific features, including restricting explicit content by using age control settings and in-app purchasing. You can also limit access to the camera and sharing of photos and very importantly, restrict your child's ability to download new apps without your consent.

There are very useful **step-by-step guides on how to do this for each type of phone, ipad, laptop or computer games console** at <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

Simply follow the link, select the type of device and follow the guide - these are genuinely very useful and we urge all parents to take the time to go through the guides and understand more about what their child can and cannot access on their phone.

Our school website also contains useful information about e-safety <http://www.teesdaleschool.co.uk/useful-info/e-safety-advice>

If you would like to discuss any concerns you have relating to your child's social media use, please contact the school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Pilling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr D Pilling
Senior Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding)