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Ref: LT/MM/SL

Dear Parents and Carers,

Safer Internet Day 2020

This week at school, as part of Safer Internet Day, we have been exploring internet safety with children and talking about their online habits.

We wanted to share some of what our children told us about their online and gaming habits that concerned us.

Many children told staff that they:

- Often used and heard inappropriate language when gaming through headsets.
- Have received/sent inappropriate/worrying messages online.
- Often played games online with people that they didn't know
- Upload videos of themselves to TikTok and YouTube (even though they knew they shouldn't). These apps have been widely reported as being unsafe for children: there are numerous privacy and safety concerns associated with children using these apps.
- Were often never/rarely supervised by adults when online or playing online games. They said that they knew an adult would not check up on what they were doing online.
- Felt it is OK to gang up on and bully another person online if no-one finds out.
- Felt it was OK to tell someone online which school they go to and give out personal details.
- Thought it was OK to play inappropriate games, even when parents and carers had told them not to.
- Felt it was OK to say unkind things about other people online.
- Often play games that they know may not be suitable for children of their age such as Roblox and Fortnite. Games such as these contain user-generated content or online chat/gaming features which they know may not be suitable for children.

- Had access to a smart phone or tablet which they use, unsupervised, in their bedrooms whenever they wished (day and night). Children reported keeping these under their pillows and using them in the middle of the night to access online games and internet content without parent/carers knowledge. Many reported that when they were told by an adult to stop using their device, they simply waited until the adult had gone before getting it out and using it again, unsupervised.

Much of what children reported about their online behaviours has really worried school staff. It seems that many children understand what safe, appropriate online behaviour is but **do not** follow advice and guidance given by adults to keep themselves safe. Additionally, by having access to devices in their bedrooms, unsupervised, children have reported getting much less sleep than is advised by health professionals. It has been proven that children who do not get enough sleep are often unable to reach the expected learning levels for their age.

Whilst school regularly educates children about the best ways to keep themselves safe online, ultimately, it is the responsibility of parents, carers and families to monitor children's online behaviour and ensure they are safe. We would urge all parents and carers to closely monitor the online and gaming habits of their children and ensure that children are always supervised when online. **We urge you to talk to your children about some of the points raised in this letter and encourage them to be honest about what they see, hear and experience online.**

There are many sources of advice for parents and carers, such as:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

If you would like any further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Lane', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr S Lane
Headteacher