



5th May 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

**ONLINE SAFETY : A PARENTS' GUIDE TO BEING SHARE AWARE
"HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE"**

We have had a few cases this year of social media sites being used inappropriately, for example to bully other students or to communicate inappropriate messages via group chats. We are also concerned that some students may be inadvertently sharing information about themselves via social media that could potentially make them vulnerable to online abuse. Most social media apps and websites require users to be at least 13 years of age and that passing or distributing inappropriate material via sites like Snapchat and Instagram can be a criminal offence. **In addition, pupils who engage in the above can, and will, face serious sanctions from the school, up to and including permanent exclusion.**

As young people increasingly use their mobile phones and social media apps to communicate with each other, it is very important that we keep our young people safe and that they do not use them to communicate with each other in inappropriate ways or to inadvertently make themselves vulnerable to online abuse. In order to be able to protect their children more effectively, we want you to be fully aware of the risks involved when your children use their mobile phones and go on the internet.

With this letter, you will find enclosed a copy of a very useful resource produced by the **NSPCC** and the mobile phone company **O2** called **A Parents' Guide to Being Share Aware**. The guide clearly highlights the potential risks involved in online activity as well as what you can do about it as a parent. It is a very useful guide, full of useful tips and advice and we would urge you to take the time to read it with your child and to implement its practical suggestions.

We would also like to draw your attention to a very useful set of online resources, again created by the **NSPCC** and **O2**, designed especially for Parents and children. These very useful and informative resources can be accessed at:

www.net-aware.org.uk

It is well worth while spending some time familiarising yourself with the apps that your child uses and how best to ensure their safety while they are on the internet. The resources on this site will help you do so.

While the school takes its responsibility regarding safe and appropriate internet use seriously and will provide support and training as required for students, for parents and for staff, there is also a responsibility on parents to ensure that they are vigilant about their child's use of social media. Later in the term we will be organising an online safety event for parents and will write to you with details in due course. In the meantime, if you have any worries, concerns or queries about anything related to the online safety of your child, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of staff or directly with myself.

Let's work together to keep our children stay safe online and to use social media responsibly.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P McEvoy
Designated Safeguarding Lead

