



Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019

***SENSITIVE CONTENT- FOR PARENTS ONLY***

Dear Families,

A very serious online safety matter has been brought to our attention today. A child in upper school has received messages and images from someone claiming to be 13 years old. The person has used *Instagram* to contact at least one of our children asking them to send indecent images and has been generally conversing and building a relationship with the child. The person has also started to send indecent images directly to the child. The person's Instagram name includes the year (19)92 however which would suggest that they are actually 27. As ever with online alias' this person could be very local and potential threat or they could live thousands of miles away but we have to share our concerns and make parents aware in the first instance before working more closely with the child/family in question.

Last week we had 3 special assemblies and extra lessons in class all about being safe online and reporting any concerns. This is as well as our constant assemblies, online safety advice for parents and displays/reminders around school for children. This year we have actually added online safety as an ongoing and equal part of our computing curriculum as believe that online safety is such a serious issue- this means that children will now learn to be safe online as much as they do to actually use computers.

I am writing this letter for 2 reasons:

1. In the immediate, please talk to your child(ren) and check that devices are being used safely and appropriately. **Please do this now.** If anyone has a child who uses Instagram please contact me so that I can share the full user name of concern- I cannot do that in a published letter that appears on our website.
2. Please continue to support our Online Safety work by ensuring that your child is only accessing appropriate content and that privacy settings/parental locks are in place on what children are using. Please consider, very carefully, how necessary it is for primary school age children to have access to social media or other apps or games. Age restrictions are there for a reason and many of our children, as amazing as they are, are not independent or mature enough to have tools that connect them and their images to whole world. Anything with chat facility is particularly dangerous as this can often mean that people can hack in to devices and access images or personal information.

I cannot stress enough how serious this is. As I said only yesterday in our newsletter 'our safety record is superb and we want to keep it that way.' Despite this, it is abundantly clear that, if we did have a serious safety issue it is highly likely to be an online issue in the world we currently live in. Please don't assume that your child is safe online, we must check and check very regularly that they are accessing safe and appropriate materials. If you feel that you need support with making devices safe you are very welcome to come into school and seek our advice or support.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

Mr. McClure