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ASHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Inspiring Today's Child for Tomorrow

Headteacher: Mrs. Carolyn Dalziel, BA(Hons), PGCE, NPQH

14th March 2018

Dear Year 6 Parents,

Re; Internet Use Update

I am disappointed to be writing to you all again regarding children's use of mobile technology at home. While I am well aware that I have no jurisdiction beyond my gate, when issues that involve children's safeguarding are brought to my attention, I must act and inform you so that you are aware of the safety implications of what the children are doing.

I has been brought to my attention that there is a **WhatsApp** group, which I believe is called "Leavers2018" that now has over 100 members. Since there are only 60 children in year 6, some of the members are not Ashfielders, in fact the children report that they don't know who some of the group members are.

Unfortunately those who originally set up the group have given others administration rights – this means they can invite and include others. These children have also invited others and given them administration rights... You can now understand how quickly this group has grown.

It seems that some children have included others from their list of contacts without their knowledge or permission and therefore shared information such as name, telephone number, age and school. Some of our children have now received telephone calls and messages from people that they don't know. These people might be other Year 6 children –but then again, they might not be.

This is a safeguarding issue. You need to be vigilant and keep your children safe. The Year 6 children are, quite naturally, naïve. We adults must not be. I think it is quite obvious from this that many parents do not really know what their children are doing with mobile technology.

Last night some of the messages were being sent between 10.30 and 11.00pm. Please ask yourselves these questions and ensure you know the answers:

- Are your children still up at 10.30pm?
- Are they allowed to have their mobile phones in their rooms?
- How do you manage mobile devices at home?
- Do you have a technology curfew?
- Where do you store the technology so that children cannot sneak it into their rooms?
- When did you last have a conversation with your child about the fact that people on-line might not be who they claim to be?

It is essential that you take control of what your children are doing on-line at home.

It is quite obvious from what has happened here that our children need our help to keep safe on line and we adults need to be fully informed ourselves in order to do so. To help us all be more aware and help keep children safe, I have invited StEPs, who are part of the St Albans Educational Partnership, to visit Ashfield and give a workshop to our children and parents. The session for parents will be at **2.00pm on Wednesday 16th May** in the Ashfield School Hall. Please put this date in your diary. While I recognise that many of you may be working, I would strongly urge to take the time to attend.

Thank you for your support.

Best wishes,



Carolyn Dalziel
Headteacher