Poulton Lancelyn Primary School

Dear Parents/Carers,

11th May 2021

It has been extremely pleasing to see how well the children have returned to their education since lockdown, and how they have coped with the difficulties, they have faced during this pandemic.

However, regrettably I must write to you to increase your awareness of an unprecedented amount of Internet/online safety issues that have recently arisen in Upper Key Stage 2.

Having only been back in school for five weeks, we have received evidence of the following issues:

- Regular access to age-restricted video gaming (For example, Grand Theft Auto rated 18) which has been discussed/re-enacted in the playground
- Extremely inappropriate material and websites being viewed
- Unkind and inappropriate behaviour towards, or about, other children on several social media sites including group WhatsApp and Instagram
- Pupils attempting to use their phones whilst on school premises
- Posts on Social Media sites related to pupils and staff
- Offensive language being used online

As you will be aware, incidents such as these are very serious as some can cause safeguarding concerns.

As a school, through our teaching and learning, each year group carries out sequences of lessons related to e-safety and educating the children about the potential dangers of the Internet. These lessons are designed around the DfE document *Teaching Online Safety in School (2019)* and focus on a range of e-safety elements that are outlined within the document.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools

At home, in order to emphasise this essential teaching further, we ask that you regularly monitor your child's devices, checking search engines and WhatsApp discussions, and talk to them routinely about their use of Social Media and the benefits and pitfalls of the Internet.

Social media sites, games and videos have age ratings to suit their appropriateness, and authorities have therefore deemed certain ones as unsuitable for primary school children, yet some of our children clearly have access to content and sites that they should not be on. Our website (https://www.poultonlancelyn.wirral.sch.uk/web/e_safety/425887) will give you examples and presentations we have delivered in previous terms to support you further with this.

Our external computing support company, Hi Impact, presented an e-safety workshop in the Autumn Term of 2020 and we are in the process of confirming a date for later in the year. We are also in the process of developing an e-safety session with Merseyside police, who will come in to talk to the children about the consequences of inappropriate technology use.

It saddens me to have to discuss an aspect of our school in a negative manner but we must work together to educate the children about e-safety therefore we urge you to be vigilant about what your children are accessing and posting online. We appreciate your full cooperation in supporting your children to make safe choices online and be kind and respectful towards others at all times.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Milne
Deputy Headteacher