



HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

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Dear parents,

Safeguarding our children

I am sure many of the children (and adults) will have been fortunate enough to have received lots of exciting new gifts this Christmas. Some of those gifts will I am sure be devices or further opportunities to access the wonderful online world. Whilst the World Wide Web is a fantastic thing, it also has the potential for serious harm. I have been shocked by some of the material and potential dangers I have heard about already this term.

Following on from the Online Safety Workshop held with Year 5 and 6 children, I was shocked to hear how many children are playing/ accessing inappropriate games/ websites outside the recommended age brackets. The school considers this a safeguarding matter and I would urge all parents to monitor their children's activity very closely. The CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection) trainer commented on how she can tell, as soon as she walks into a room, whether they are accessing age-inappropriate material from their behaviour. The impact of these games/ sites is really very noticeable and serious. Many of the other users of these sites are adults who are expecting other adults to be co-users and therefore not modifying their behaviour/ language to suit children. It is impossible to 'un-see' or 'un-hear' something and some images and words can play on children's minds for years to come.

I look forward to seeing all Year 5 and Year 6 parents (open to all parents if requested) at our Online Safety parents talk on **Monday 23rd January at 9 am in school or 5.30 pm on Teams**. Further information about keeping safe online and how to register concerns is available from a range of sources, including the NSPCC and CEOP. This short video explains what is on offer

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

Other useful resources can be found at

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/> and <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

The following links provide some very useful information about safety considerations when using VR headsets and about the game Fortnite which is rated as 12 and should not therefore be being played by any children at this school.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/christmas-vr-safety-advice-for-parents-metaverse/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/fortnite-battle-royal-parents-guide-keep-kids-safe-gaming/>

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this further, please do let me know.

Kind regards

Mrs Phillips

Headteacher