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E-Safety Concerns

Dear Parents,

Saxon Primary School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a growing concern, due to the increase in inappropriate use of Skype, Snapchat Instagram, Facebook and other texting sites.

Many of the issues that have been brought to our attention recently have involved the use of:

• Skype - a video and messaging app. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.

• Instagram and Snapchat - an online mobile photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service which enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.

• Facebook - a social networking site. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.

• Whats App – An instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be age 16 or older.

We understand that it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the ways that our children are using new and ever changing technologies. Our children are immersed in a society that has become dependent on powerful computers, including smart phones, iPads, interactive online games and virtual communities.

When monitoring your son/daughter's internet use, please remind yourself of the concerns of social media:

• Many sites use 'targeted' advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of an inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated when they registered. They may have lied about their age to get an account, making them appear older than they are, increasing this risk.

• Young people may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behaviour. The general rule is, if they aren't friends in real life, they shouldn't be 'friends' online.

• Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on social media is NOT moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for young people.

• Photographs shared by users are NOT moderated and therefore young people could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own.

• Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities private and lying about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options.

• Social media sites can be exploited by bullies and for inappropriate contact.

• Social media sites cannot and do not verify its members, therefore, it is important to remember that if your son/daughter can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else. Primarily, these occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after school hours when children have access to web sites that are blocked in school.

With this in mind, and in response to concerned parents who have asked for advice regarding internet safety, we feel it important to point out to parents the risks of unregulated use of such sites, so you can make informed decisions as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not and when and how to monitor their use, particularly at night time.

We recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online *https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/*, *www.net-aware.org.uk* and *www.getsafeonline.org.* Through lessons provided at school, assemblies, guest speakers, and PSHE lessons, we do our best to provide our children with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognise and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful behaviour and to respond appropriately. However, it is only through a collaborative effort between parents and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

Thank you for your support with this matter.

Miss Revels-Hull
Computing Subject Leader