



Executive Headteacher: Mrs L. Gould  
Head of School: Mr R. Leigh

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9<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Re: Internet safety and the use of Social Media**

The Globe Primary Academy 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 OoVoo, Skype, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and other texting sites. Many of the issues that have been brought to our attention recently have involved the use of:

- OoVoo which is a video and messaging app, it allows video chats of up to 12 people at one time. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.
- Skype - a video and messaging app. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.
- Instagram - 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 13 or older. Children are often creating 'groups' to which others are joining. This means that all information is shared with anyone who is in the group so privacy is lost and in some cases strangers have been added to the group.

**New technologies**

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 smartphones, iPads/tablets, interactive online games and virtual communities.

Websites and applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Skype, WhatsApp, Viber and OoVoo, to name but a few, offer fantastic opportunities for communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind. This is especially the case for applications and sites

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such as Facebook and Instagram which are specifically for those over 13 years old. 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 a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated they were when they registered.
- 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. A 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 generally 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 this 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 their members, therefore, it is important to remember that some of those on social media sites may not be whom they seem.

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's important to remind parents/carers of the risks of unregulated use of such sites. In this way 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 strongly recommend that pupils of primary school age do not use such sites.** If you decide that such sites are appropriate for your child, then we would always recommend that use of the sites is done in your presence and not used unsupervised.

Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours, which is parent/carer's responsibility, we will take firm action if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our pupils, including reporting the use of inappropriate images of young people to the police, as this is a legal matter. This also refers to inappropriate text messages and comments posted using messaging applications.

It has been brought to our attention that pupils are using social media site to belittle and be unkind to other pupils, including when doing so through the use of foul and abusive language in some



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instances. Furthermore, pupils are also carrying out such actions knowing they are clearly identifiable as pupils of The Globe and that their conduct online could adversely affect the reputation of the school's good name.

**We are therefore asking all parents and carers of pupils using mobile phones or similar devices at Key Stage 2, to please take the time to check their child's device to ensure that their child's recent usage or membership of such groups has been appropriate at all times and to take appropriate action, as suggested in this letter, if this has not been the case.**

Through lessons provided at school, assemblies 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 have the knowledge to respond appropriately. However, it is only through a collaborative effort between parents/carers and school staff that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

We urge you to contact your child's class teacher or a member of the school's senior leadership team should you have any queries regarding this matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Gould'.

Mrs L. Gould  
Executive Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Leigh'.

Mr R. Leigh  
Head of School