



Dear Parent/Carer

19th January 2017

Use of Instagram – Internet Safety

It has come to my attention that some children in Year 6 have Instagram profiles which do not have the adequate privacy settings attached to them.

We are committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the Internet and as such I am raising this particular issue as a concern. Websites such as Instagram offer communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind and this is specifically over 13 years old. The Terms and Conditions state that Instagram should not be used by any child under 13 years of age. Possible risks for children under 13 using the site may include:

- ❖ Instagram uses “age 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
- ❖ Children may accept friend requests from people they do not know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behaviour
- ❖ Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on Instagram is not moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for children
- ❖ Photographs shared by users are not moderated and therefore children 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
- ❖ Instagram cannot and does not verify its members therefore it is important to remember that if your child can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else!

Should you decide to allow your child to have an Instagram profile I would recommend the following actions for you to follow:

- ❖ Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted. **A number of children in Year 6 have profiles which do not have any privacy settings on them.**
- ❖ Monitor your child’s use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting offensive messages or photos.
- ❖ Ask them to install the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) application from <https://www.ceop.police.uk/> on their profile. This places a bookmark on their profile to CEOP and the Report Abuse button which has been known to deter offenders.
- ❖ Have a look at the advice for parents/carers from Instagram on their website.
- ❖ Set up your own profile so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as a friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online.

❖ Make sure your child understands the following rules:

- Always keep your profile private
- Never accept friends you do not know in real life
- Never post anything which could reveal your identity
- Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult
- Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you

There is a website which provides excellent information for parents on how to keep your child safe online. This can be found at www.thinkuknow.co.uk

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs Jones', written over a horizontal line.

Mrs Jones
Deputy Headteacher