Gladstone Road Primary School

Wooler Street, Scarborough
North Yorkshire, YO12 7DD

Head teacher: Mr G Johnson

Tel: 01723 372566
Email: admin@gladstone.n-yorks.sch.uk

Learning to Succeed

December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

Social Media and keeping your child safe: E-safety - key information for parents/carers

It has been brought to our attention that some of our children have Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Roblox and other social media profiles, even though the permitted minimum age to use these sites is 13 years old, according to their terms and conditions.

Gladstone Road Primary School is committed to keeping our children safe and to promoting the safe, responsible use of the Internet. As such, we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a concern.

Individual profile problems - We have discovered that many of the children's social media profiles:
• are not properly secured with poor privacy settings that mean anyone in the world can see their profile
• have pictures of them (and other children) in their school uniform, which makes them easily identifiable and means people can work out where they will be in real life
• have content which is wholly inappropriate in terms of the language and/or images on them. (And even if your child's profile is appropriate, being 'friends' with someone who has such a profile means your child can see it).

General social networking issues websites such as Facebook offer amazing communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind and this is specifically over 13 years old. Possible risks for children under 13 using the site may include:
• Facebook use "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 don't know in real life, which could increase the risk of inappropriate or dangerous contact or behaviour
• Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on Facebook 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
• Facebook could be exploited by bullies and for other inappropriate contact.
• Facebook cannot and does not verify its members; therefore it is important to remember that if your child can lie about their age and who they are online, so can anyone else!

Parental responsibility - We feel it is important to point out to parents the risks of underage use of such sites, so you can make an informed decision as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not at the

moment. Should you decide to allow your child of any age to have a Facebook profile we strongly advise you to:

  • Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted
  • 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 www.facebook.com/clickceop 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 Facebook - http://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/parents/
  • 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 basic E-safety rules that we have learnt about at school. - Always keep your profile as private as possible. - If possible, don't put in your full name, e.g. Bart S, instead of Bart Simpson - Never accept friends you don't know in real life - Never post anything – writing or images – which could reveal your identity - Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents to see - 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 We also recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk

School support and action – Gladstone Road Primary School takes e-safety very seriously, and we discuss E-Safety issues throughout the year with our pupils. If you feel that you, or your child, needs further support in keeping your child safe on the internet, please make an appointment to speak to a member of our Safeguarding Team. Because of our duty to all the children in our school, we will take action, which may involve the police, if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our pupils.

We would also like to take this opportunity to ask your children to remember to be kind and considerate towards other children when using social media platforms. Name calling, excluding others from chat groups, use of inappropriate language can be very upsetting to their peers. School staff are spending a lot of time dealing with these issues in school and we would appreciate your continued support by regularly checking your child's phone, tablet or device.

Best wishes

Garry Johnson
Head teacher