



Wednesday 13th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Online safety - key information for parents/carers

As we approach the end of the school half term, we are seeking your support to help address a difficult issue which is beginning to impact our primary school children. The issue is broadly about how we safeguard our children from inappropriate materials and influence through digital media - computer games, streaming platforms, and Internet browsing.

It is a sensitive subject and, whilst it is not our place to tell parents how to bring up their children; we have a duty to respond when issues emerge in the school setting and would like to ask you for your support with this matter.

Recent communication from parents, comments during school lessons and inappropriate playground games have revealed that an increasing number of our young children are regularly playing and experiencing computer games and films which involve extreme violence, sexualised content, abusive language, and adult decision making.

There is a particular pattern with some primary school children being allowed to play games with an inappropriate PEGI rating (age rating). Children are also browsing the Internet and are being exposed to unsuitable clips and content.

**The Rushden Primary Academy is part of the Greenwood Dale Foundation
Trust Group of Academies**

The second area of concern is access by primary school children to social networking and gaming sites (e.g. Tic Toc, Facebook, WhatsApp, Musical.ly, SnapChat). Most social networking sites require users to be at least 13 before they create an account as there is considerable risk to young children including exposure to unfitting content and grooming.

At Rushden Primary Academy we take these concerns seriously. We ensure that we are playing our part through sensible education and online safety lessons, supported by the Target Team and community police officers. However, as adults, we all must take responsibility for keeping our young children safe and controlling access to inappropriate materials.

We would encourage you to spend some time discussing Internet use and safe gaming with your children and then come up with an agreement about what is acceptable.

It is hard to be aware of all the extreme content of some of the materials the children are accessing. However, using parental controls and settings can be applied to both devices and Internet access points. We strongly encourage you to check these on a regular basis.

We have listed below some useful resources to help you understand the issue and help is also available through our community police officers and staff.

Please let's all work together to keep our children safe. Should you have any concerns then ask the office to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or speak directly with the Class Teachers.

Useful Links:

- NSPCC - Online Safety: (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>)
- ChildNet - downloadable leaflets: <http://www.childnet.com/blog/free-internet-safety-leaflets-for-parents-2016>
- Net Aware - this site provides information and gives safety ratings on all of the popular apps: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
- Think U Know - guides to online exploitation: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>

With thanks for your continued support,

RPA Safeguarding Team