



Gayton Church of England VC Primary School

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Learn, Laugh, Love and be the Best that you can be!

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important Information About Internet safety and the use of Social Media

Gayton 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.

It has come our attention that many young children are using OoVoo, Skype, Instagram, Facebook and other texting sites. We have recently discovered that some children have set up an account without their parents knowledge and that accounts are being used by children as young as 6.

- **OoVoo** - 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 16 or older.**

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 when they registered. They will 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 used 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.

These sites are blocked at school but 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.

When you do decide to allow your child to have an online profile we strongly advise you:

- **Ensure they can screenshot on their device to enable them to report any inappropriate comments. Some devices do not have screenshot capability.**
- Check their profile is set to private so that only their friends can see information they post.
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting or messaging offensive /inappropriate messages or photo's.
- Monitor your child's use of language and how they communicate to other people, ensuring profanity is discouraged.
- They need to understand that some comments may be misunderstood by their intended audience. It is not the same as talking face to face.
- Have a look at advice for parents on the social media sites.
- Set up your own profiles so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as their friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online.

Make sure your son/daughter understand 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 including photographs wearing school uniform where possible.
- Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents or teachers 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. **SCREENSHOT!**

We recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk www.net-aware.org.uk
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.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Greenhalgh

