



Ashford Church of England Primary School

23 February 2017

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been brought to our attention by parents and children in Year 5 and 6 that many children have accounts on the social networking site, Instagram. Instagram is a photo sharing app designed for people 13 years and over to post pictures and comment on them in a fun way. Unfortunately, it would appear that some children are using it inappropriately as a tool for making unkind comments about each other.

After seeing first-hand some of the activity and comments, we feel it is our responsibility to bring the following issues to your attention:

Firstly, several children have multiple accounts with no privacy settings enabled. These are, therefore, public accounts where anyone can see pictures. These include images of children, which is one way in which predators can identify potential victims for grooming purposes.

Secondly, there has been evidence that children are active on the site late at night and in the early hours of the morning. Also, we have seen several instances of obscene comments which could be viewed as cyberbullying and are incredibly hurtful to the recipients.

As this is happening outside of school, we have a limited ability to intervene in these cases however, the school's Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Physical Intervention and Exclusion Policy does make it clear that "where incidents outside school are witnessed by school staff or reported to the school, the headteacher will use their discretion...and if a sanction is deemed necessary, it will be applied in line with the policy." This could include behaviour at any time which "could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school" or "poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public."

Instagram can be a very useful tool and a way for children to share ideas and experiences with friends. The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of some ways in which it is being misused, so that you can take any action you deem necessary to safeguard your children. There is a wealth of valuable guidance about e-safety, Instagram and other social media available in the Parents section of the school website, the link to which is below.

<http://www.ashford-primary.surrey.sch.uk/parents/safety.php#esafety>

In school, we shall be discussing safe and responsible use of the Internet and social networking. Any specific incidents of cyberbullying or homophobic comments brought to our attention by children or parents will be dealt with in line with the policy quoted above.

If you would like to discuss further any of these issues, please feel free to make an appointment through the school office and we will be happy to meet with you.

Yours sincerely,

The Senior Leadership Team



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