



## High Ash School

### Important - Online Safety Awareness – Issue 2

December 2025

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#### *How is the Internet, Social Media & Technology raising your child?*

#### *Do we know enough to do enough?*

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#### For Parents, Carers & Guardians

As promised in our first online safety awareness newsletter, this issue covers off why it so important that we all consider what apps, platforms and medias our children are accessing, using, reading and listening to.

As previously mentioned, Do we know enough to do enough to protect our children from harm?

We know that are all already doing a great number of things to protect your children online at home and on their devices but as ever there is always more we can all do.

#### So why should you be vigilant?

There are many reasons to have concerns and be aware of what your child may be watching, have access to or be sharing. Some of these listed you may think aren't an issue in High Ash as a quiet village based primary school with children of a younger age, but we are aware of some of these issues arising amongst similar age groups and set ups elsewhere and we are of the firm belief that to be aware of them all and be vigilant can do no harm. When safeguarding our children we all should always be mindful of **'it could happen here'**.

Please be assured that we are by no means trying to scaremonger via this information and you may already be aware of many of the concerns listed below. You may well have read about or seen various articles on these points especially over recent months, but we wanted to ensure we covered all aspects that potentially could harm our children and in some instances have actually led to some sad and extreme outcomes.

- **Mental health and well-being** – the effects of online content and exposure to various risks are well documented. Could your child perhaps be relying on it as an emotional crutch? Is there a risk of addiction to their devices? Could it be affecting their cognitive and emotional development? Could they be targeted by abusers or bullies that could affect their well-being? How do you monitor any possible effects on their happiness and sleep for eg? Have their moods and behaviours changed?
- **Device time** – how much time does your child spend online? Are they over exposed? Do you restrict the time spent? Do you know what they are watching or being influenced by?
- **Age-appropriate access & content** – do you check AND monitor their access to various apps and sites to ensure they are age appropriate? Are you comfortable with the content they are looking at/watching/receiving/sending?
- **Fake profiles; online identities; stranger safety; predators and grooming**– do you know who they are in contact with, talking to or perhaps gaming with? What do you have in place for them to accept 'friends' online? Do they have any 'other' online identities other than themselves?
- **Cyber-Bullying** – do you know if any bullying is happening around your child? Either as a victim or sadly even as a perpetrator? This can often include the body shaming of others. Are they part of a group under pressure to participate to fit in? Are any of their friends being bullied online creating fear for them too?
- **Sexual exploitation** – as above, what do you check? Do you know who they are talking to online?

- **Radicalisation** – similarly, do you know what they may be looking at or discussing/getting involved with?
- **Gambling** – some sites may suggest links to gambling organisations – how do you prevent clicks to sites like these that you don't want your child to access?
- **Violence** – again, some innocent sites may suggest links act as baiting clicks to sites where violence may be the norm? Perhaps linked to the misogyny mentioned below. Do any of the games they access contain violence of a nature you are not comfortable with?
- **Sexting** – do you check their messages on all such apps and any links/attachments to know if anything of a sexual nature is being said/shared? Do you check their photos?
- **Usage of emojis** - we all use emojis in our messaging but are they using them appropriately? The next generation are using emojis to convey different and quite meanings (for eg a peach emoji isn't always an innocent fruit as it may be to you and I, but can be used to denote a backside/bottom; a plug emoji is linked to drug dealing; other common emojis used can be linked to the manosphere (the red pill or the kidney bean), or even others referencing male and female genitalia)
- **Misogyny/Incel communities** - (referenced in the drama Adolescence)/'the manosphere' (a network of online communities that focus on men and masculinity, but often promote misogyny, sexism, resentment, and harmful ideologies) – I am sure we are all aware of this unhealthy topic through the news relating to Andrew Tate. Sadly, this is of growing prevalence in secondary schools and is filtering down to younger ages too. Teaching unions are confirming that social media influencers are fuelling an increase in misogyny and sexism in schools. So do you know if your child has seen anything on this? Has it been discussed with your child? The use of some emojis by children of our children's age (as mentioned above) can be linked to this issue.

We are very aware that reading all of this may be quite unsavoury and it can make us feel very uncomfortable. To our generation, much of this is probably quite alien or may even be brand new knowledge, however, we all have the responsibility to keep our children safe from harm and ensure that as many of these potential online dangers are avoided/ prevented. Therefore, to proactively air them with you via this newsletter and encourage your awareness and vigilance is in our view, a responsible and essential action for us to take.

In our next issue we will cover some of the more popular platforms and apps in use and some key information surrounding them which we hope you'll find useful.

Kind Regards

High Ash School and the Board of Governors