

Headteacher/Letters09-10/WhlSch/MSN

12 July 2010

Are Your Children Safe Using The Home Computer? IMPORTANT NOTICE – PLEASE READ!

Dear Parents and Students of Finham Park,

As you are aware, Finham Park School prides itself on providing a safe environment for our students. We follow-up on each incident of bullying that is reported to us and do our best to educate all students on how to effectively deal with bullying if it does occur. Finham Park is already a safe school, however we are continually working towards making it even safer. As a community, teachers, students, and parents have responsibilities to ensure safety:

For example:

Students: our students know that one way to keep Finham Park safe and to help reduce the instances of bullying is by reporting unsafe incidents to an adult.

Teachers: all school staff have the responsibility of educating students on “taking action against bullying”, and immediately intervening when instances do occur.

Parents: parents can help by keeping the lines of communication open with your children and by monitoring and “keeping an eye” on what your children are up to.

For Your Information: Social Networking Site Alert!

Do your children have access to MSN, Facebook, MySpace, Bebo or E-Mail at home? Many of our students are using MSN and Facebook as a way to communicate with their friends from home. Unfortunately, we have discovered that there are a number of instances of misuse of this. This is being called e-bullying (Electronic Bullying). National information shows that huge numbers of students who use MSN and Facebook have, at some point, come across or been involved in e-bullying at home. Inappropriate messages are sent and received through MSN and Facebook, some including outright threats. Although every incident has happened from home, the fallout with relationships between students happens in school. At school, every attempt is made to block these social networking sites through a council operated filter system.

The problem is the same across the country and across the world: A survey by a Dutch Internet service provider has found that 12% of teenagers between 11 and 15 years old experience bullying on the Internet, with the majority being on MSN, Facebook, or similar chat rooms.

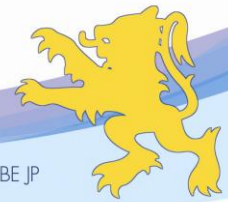
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Finham Park School
Green Lane
Coventry
CV3 6EA

t: 024 7641 8135
f: 024 7684 0803
e: headteacher@finhampark.co.uk
w: www.finhampark.co.uk

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Our Recommendations:

For Parents:

1. Discuss this issue at home with your children. Encourage them to report any misuse to an adult they trust.
2. For guidance on supporting your child to use the internet wisely and in safety go to: www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/yourchildshealthandsafety/internetsafety
3. Closely supervise and monitor social networking site use at all times! YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR CHILD'S PASSWORD AND BE ABLE TO CHECK THEIR COMMUNICATION AT ANY TIME. Use of MSN/ Facebook is a privilege, not a right.
4. Insist on no use of social networking sites at home unless an adult is supervising.
5. Ask questions if your child seems upset after going online.
6. Report abusive -if you believe that your child is being threatened, harassed or bullied please inform the police and let school know.

For Students (parents please discuss this with your child):

1. Never give out passwords or PIN's to friends.
2. Don't send messages when you are angry.
3. Never say something in an e-mail that you wouldn't say to somebody's face.
4. Do not use your email account to bully or emotionally harm anyone
5. Do not use offensive or inappropriate language i.e. racist, sexist, homophobic, abusive or expressing any kind of prejudice
6. Do not forward circulars or chain letters.
7. Tell an adult if you receive anything offensive in an email

If you are a target of online bullying:

- Do not open, forward, read, or respond to messages from cyber bullies.
- Save all messages as evidence.

Misuse of the Internet, whether generated at home or school, will be punished in line with the school's behaviour policy which may ultimately result in possible exclusion.

If you have further questions regarding E-Bullying, please contact a member of the school leadership team.

Thank you for your assistance in keeping the Finham Park School community as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mark Bailie
Headteacher

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