

# Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy

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Dear Parents,

## E-Safety Update

As a School, we are committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet, working alongside parents to assist and support Children's use of the internet and online tools/games. As such, we like to provide timely updates to reiterate the main points of Online safety.

This month we celebrated Safer Internet day which was celebrated globally on Tuesday 5th February with the slogan: 'Together for a better Internet'. Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, the celebration sees hundreds of organisations get involved and join a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.

At Northwick Park, we celebrated the day with a child-led assembly giving our Year 6 Digital Leaders the opportunity to highlight positive uses of technology and to explore the role we all play in helping to create a better and safer online community.

The use of **Instagram, Facebook** and other texting sites have been brought to our attention again alongside some very scary/dare apps such as **Momo Challenge, Blue Whale** and vlogging site **TikTok**.

The following is a reminder of the guidelines regarding the social media sites.

- 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 use agreement requires users to be age 16 or older.** We understand that this is a common favourite as it allows internet usage via wi-fi to reduce to costs involved for messaging etc. but it is advisable that a child's account is linked to the parent account so that conversations and friendships etc. can be monitored by an adult. Instructions of how to link What'sApp accounts can be found for iPhone and android via Google.
- Children are often creating 'groups' to which others are joining. This means that all information is share with anyone who is in the group so privacy is lost and in some cases strangers have been added to the group.

Many sites use 'targeted' advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other appropriate nature to the site, depending on the age they stated when they registered. They may have lied about their age to get an account, making them appear older than they are, increasing this risk.

- **TikTok** is a video uploading app, it allows children to upload videos of themselves lip syncing to their favourite songs. **You are expected to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.** (it does not ask for verification). The app has recently come under fire for its lack of privacy settings. There has been concern that young children have exposed their identities, posting videos in school uniform, for instance.
- **MoMo** Challenge and Blue Whale. Momo doesn't appear to be as widespread as Blue Whale , but this could be early days, it seems, it appears in WhatsApp accounts (but also seen in Reddit, Roblox, YouTube and Instagram) that reportedly send a message saying something like, "you should send a message to this number \_\_\_\_\_, which will send you predictions about your future." According to some reports, the message might include a threat that the recipient will be cursed if they don't reply. If someone does contact "Momo they reportedly get other threats, frightening photos, and/or challenges to complete harmful tasks. So people who reply to or contact a Momo account are basically giving someone permission to troll them—and possibly send malware to their devices.
- Smart Watches are NOT Permitted in school. Any watch that has a camera or internet access should be left at home or the school office along with phones.

### **How can you Help?**

- 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. The legal age for police involvement in case of holding and sharing inappropriate images is now 10 Years old.
- 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 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.

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](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk). Links are also available through our school website [www.northwickpark.essex.sch.uk](http://www.northwickpark.essex.sch.uk). If you would like more information regarding online safety, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Lane or Mrs Rising or your child's class teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E. Lane  
Headteacher