Hertfordshire County Council

# Featherstone Wood Primary School

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**E-safety**

Dear Parents and carers,

It recently came to our attention that some of our children have been posting videos of themselves on YouTube and other sites. In themselves these videos are harmless but the children are giving away a worrying amount of information about themselves and their friends. By watching a few of the videos and looking at the comments posted beneath them we were able to find out: -

- Full names of themselves and their friends.
- Username Handles for other sites.
- Their age.
- What school they go to now and will be going to next.
- What they like doing, sometimes with details of where.
- Mums names were also given out.
- Younger siblings appear in the video occasionally.
- Sometimes we can see photos, toys etc. in the background.
- School uniform.
- Trips out.
- Sometimes they are in their pyjamas.

Although a lot of this might seem harmless when it is all put together it means our children can be identified and found in real life. Unfortunately the children have unknowingly put themselves and their friends in very vulnerable positions. Although this is happening at home, it involves a large number of our students and our school can be identified.

It is also evident that some of the children are using their parents log in details. This is putting your information and probably other sites that you use at risk as we often use the same passwords. We should never share our password with anyone else.

All Hertfordshire schools have a duty to act upon issues, wherever they take place that could affect the children's safety. With this in mind all classes will be receiving extra e-safety lessons over the next week.

I would like to draw your attention to the CEOP site -http://www.ceop.police.uk/  it is a very useful and informative site with clips you can use with your children. These are the top tips from their site.

- **Talk to your child about what they're up to online**. Be a part of their online life; involve the whole family and show an interest. Find out what sites they visit and what they love about them, if they know you understand they are more likely to come to you if they have any problems.
- **Watch Thinkuknow films and cartoons with your child**. The **Thinkuknow site** has films, games and advice for children from five all the way to 16.
- **Encourage your child to go online and explore!** There is a wealth of age-appropriate sites online for your children. Encourage them to use sites which are fun, educational and that will help them to develop online skills.
- **Keep up-to-date with your child's development online**. Children grow up fast and they will be growing in confidence and learning new skills daily. It's important that as your child learns more, so do you.
- **Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world**. Think about what they might see, what they share, who they talk to and how long they spend online. It is important to discuss boundaries at a young age to develop the tools and skills children need to enjoy their time online.
- **Keep all equipment that connects to the internet in a family space**. For children of this age, it is important to keep internet use in family areas so you can see the sites your child is using and be there for them if they stumble across something they don't want to see.
- **Know what connects to the internet and how**. Nowadays even the TV connects to the internet. Make sure you're aware of which devices that your child uses connect to the internet, such as their phone or games console. Also, find out how they are accessing the internet – is it your connection, or a neighbour's wifi? This will affect whether the safety setting you set are being applied.
- **Use parental controls on devices that link to the internet, such as the TV, laptops, computers, games consoles and mobile phones**. Parental controls are not just about locking and blocking, they are a tool to help you set appropriate boundaries as your child grows and develops. They are not the answer to your child's online safety, but they are a good start and they are not as difficult to install as you might think. Service providers are working hard to make them simple, effective and user friendly. **Find your service provider and learn how to set your controls**

If you have a child who is at, or is due to start, **secondary school**, read our secondary school advice to find out what you can do to support them.

This issue became apparent to us following a report from a parent about some children posting nasty comments about each other on line.  Cyber bullying is a serious issues and it is a criminal offense to post anything in writing on the internet or via email. This is because there is considered to be intent – the writer has taken the time to log in and compose the text and therefore intended it to cause offense or hurt. The CEOP site has some very useful information on cyber bullying too.

I realise that this is a minefield these days and it was much easier when we could only make mixer  tapes but it is a good lesson for us all because as adults we might be putting too much information out there that can be taken advantage of too.

 I have asked the children to review their posts tonight and delete anything that gives away too much. I am sure you will be doing this with them. None of the content that we saw was

offensive or rude and so would not have been picked up by your parental controls that you have in place.

The older pupils are able to access a kid's blog which is run through the school and all have their own log in details. Nothing gets posted to the site until it has been viewed by their teacher. I know that our children understand a lot, probably more than we do, about the internet and e-safety and they are very articulate about it. However, mistakes can happen and it is vital that we all work together to ensure all our children are safe and protected.

If you have any further questions do contact the school


Louise Shuttleworth
Headteacher