

Frettenham Primary School  
Hainford Primary School  
Horsford Primary School  
Old Catton Junior School  
White Woman Lane School  
St. Faiths' Primary School



Nebula  
where stars are born

Ashley Best-White  
Executive Headteacher

December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Incidents and safeguarding concerns linked to children's access to mobile phones or social media have sadly become common in our society. Nowadays, our children have access to technology that can pose a risk to their physical and mental wellbeing, and that of their peers, and can have profound consequences on behaviour. In our schools, our first priority is to keep our children safe.

As we head towards Christmas, our children will potentially have more time to use their technology and indeed may be looking forward to a mobile phone, laptop or tablet as a Christmas gift. Therefore, it seemed timely to send some information home to help you as parents to be aware of how your child is using their mobile phone or laptop.

For instance, all social media apps are for pupils upwards of 13 years of age unless parental permission is given. Nevertheless, we are aware that some of our children regularly have access to these sites. Age ratings are in place in order to keep children safe from exposure to harmful or inappropriate material. Please also see the copy of the online safety newsletter which offers more advice.

We would always suggest that you should have rules in place in the home regarding the use of technology. Monitoring of use should take place together with conversations about online safety. Here are some examples of mobile phone rules for the whole family that you may find useful:

- Mobile devices stay out of bedrooms after an agreed time.
- Mobile and other devices are charged in a family area overnight.

You might find it helps to create an agreement that both you and your child sign. An example can be found on the following link: <https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Family-Agreement.pdf>

Please see below some conversation starters that you may find helpful when discussing online activity with your child:

- Are they happy to show what they are doing online? If not, why not?
- What apps are being used? Are they age appropriate and being used appropriately? The following link can be used to check on the suitability of apps: <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews>
- How many friends do they have online? Are these friends they have actually met? Are settings on private?

In recent years, a range of monitoring software programmes have appeared to allow parents and carers to see what children are doing online and set digital boundaries. The iOS platform on iPhone and iPad has built-in features that offer family controls for free and Google Family Link is a free Android-only app that allows parents to control children's Android devices through their iPhone or Android phone. Parents can set time limits, manage apps children can use by approving or blocking them and set device bedtime. There are also apps that you purchase such as Circle, which allows you to manage screen time and monitor not just some, but ALL websites and apps. You can set the rules for apps like WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, Discord (and many more) across all your family's connected devices. Advice on how to set controls on mobile phones can be found on the following link:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

I have also attached a booklet, which provides advice on how to set up parental controls on your child's devices.

We do, of course, work with our children in school to highlight the above and how to keep themselves safe online; the majority of such websites are not available to them in school on school devices however as we have filters in place that restrict access. Therefore, your support is invaluable as it makes a significant contribution to their safety and wellbeing.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. D. Best-White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "White".

Ashley Best-White  
Executive Headteacher  
The Nebula Federation