



2nd December 2020

Online Safety Support and Information

Dear Parents & Carers,

At Parkland, we are seeing a huge increase in the number of online issues between pupils which are then being brought into school. Being online is now a part of our pupils' lives and we understand how important it is for them, particularly now as they cannot meet up in person outside school. Social media, online games, websites, and apps can be accessed through mobile phones, computers, laptops, and tablets – all of which form a part of children and young people's online world.

We see the value in online activities, but we want to ensure that every child is safe and free from harm. At school, we provide online safety lessons and reinforce messages regularly. However, **we are not able to enforce what happens outside school and need your help to ensure your children are safe.** Many issues are brought into school when children fall out with each other and say unkind things online via grouping messaging apps and online gaming platforms. Our aim is to teach our pupils to have the skills to be safe and happy online.

We also want to teach children to have the skills to deal with anything that worries them online. If a child needs to report a concern, we want them to feel confident that they will do so. Some of our pupils have told us they have not reported incidents as they are worried about having a device taken away from them. We would like to support you in knowing how to deal with any concerns that your child may have.

What we can do to encourage children to tell:

- **Listen carefully to what they're saying**
Be patient and focus on what you're being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. If you appear shocked or as if you don't believe them, it could make them stop talking and take back what they've said.
- **Give them the tools to talk**
If they're struggling to talk to you, show them [Childline's letter builder tool](#). It uses simple prompts to help them share what's happening and how they're feeling.
- **Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you**
Reassurance can make a big impact. If they've kept it a secret, it can have a big impact knowing they've shared what's happened.
- **Tell them it's not their fault**
Online abuse is never a child's fault. It's important they hear, and know, this. They may fear being blamed or having a negative consequence imposed on them.
- **Say you'll take them seriously**
They may have kept the online incident a secret because they were scared they wouldn't be believed. Make sure they know they can trust you and you'll listen and support them.

- **Don't confront the alleged abuser**
Confronting the alleged abuser could make the situation worse for the child. Find out as many details as you can about the person, take screen shots etc as evidence to share with the relevant agencies. Never redistribute any offensive images and only show them if asked to by the police.
- **Explain what you'll do next**
For younger children, explain you're going to speak to someone who will be able to help. For older children, explain you'll need to report the abuse to someone who can help.

We ask that you:

- Monitor your child's online activity; it is essential you know what they are accessing.
- If your children are playing games online, play the game with them so that you understand how the game works and the potential issues around them
- Talk to your child about who they are talking to online – they should never be talking to strangers.
- Ensure that your child is never saying unkind things online.

For more help and information (including advice on parental controls) go to our school website online safety area: <https://parklandprimary.co.uk/pupil-zone/esafety>. There is lots of information about apps and online games to help you understand more.

We understand that technology is moving very quickly and as parents it can be hard to keep up! We want to support you and work with you to ensure we keep your children safe and happy. Please speak to your child's teacher if you have further concerns.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Andrews
Headteacher