

St. Michael's Catholic Primary School
Guion Street
Liverpool L6 9DU
Tel: 0151 263 8460 Fax: 0151 263 4120
Headteacher Mrs Alyson Rigby



Email michaels-ao@st-michaels.liverpool.sch.uk
www.stmichaelscatholicprimary.co.uk

*"With Jesus, we can
achieve what we
dream and believe"*

Friday 12th May 2023

Dear Parents and Carers of year 5 and year 6 children

Staying Safer Online

One particularly unpleasant aspect of online safety is cyberbullying - this is when someone bullies others, using electronic means; this might involve social media and messaging apps accessed on a mobile phone, laptop, desktop, tablet or gaming platform.

At St Michael's, we take all kinds of bullying very seriously. If your child feels that they are being bullied, then do let us know - we are always willing to listen to and support children who are having difficulties.

Like any form of bullying, cyberbullying can be horrible for the children involved and sometimes hard for them to talk about.

You can find out more about cyberbullying at the website below -

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/>

I would also like to remind parents/carers to be increasingly vigilant about the social media apps that your son or daughter may be using. Most social media apps are designed for **age 13** and upwards; and whilst it is not against the law to use social media if you are under 13, your child may be in breach of the terms and conditions of the particular social media app that they are using.

For example, number 1 in **Instagram's T&C's** states that **You must be at least 13 years old to use the service**; for **Snapchat** and **TikTok** it's also 13, and for **WhatsApp**, it is 16.

The internet and social media are wonderful but sadly, on occasions children can use these platforms to be very unkind to one another, which can cause untold distress.

As a school, we would encourage all parents to keep an eye on their child's usage of such apps. Unpleasant posts can also have a lasting impact on other children's mental health and well-being, too.

At St Michael's, we teach children to use technology **safely, responsibly and respectfully** and we hope that you will encourage your child to do likewise at home.



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In school WE CANNOT manage the communications between children outside of school on social media platforms. We cannot see the messages and on some platforms messages are deleted after being read. Currently teachers are spending a significant amount of time trying to resolve issues that are taking place out of school on platforms that primary aged children should not be accessing at all.

Teachers attempting to resolve these matters are being taken away from teaching time.

Children are coming to school upset about unkind exchanges and communications thus not ready to learn. These unkind communications and messages are also having a negative impact on children's friendships in school.

I strongly suggest to keep your child safe from any unkind communication you do not allow them to access social media platforms.

As always, if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to call in and make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or myself.

Thank you for your support with this matter

Alyson Rigby

Headteacher



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