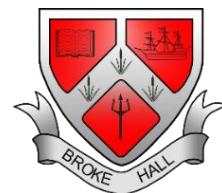


Broke Hall Primary School



Summer Term 1 2024

Online Safety Newsletter

We know that much of your child's education, information and social interaction either is, or will be in the future, digital in one form or another. Like it or not, we live in a digital age and it is our responsibility to teach our children, at school and at home how to lead this part of their lives as safely and healthily as possible. Online communication is the ultimate expression of freedom of speech but the lack of regulation and legislation surrounding the internet leaves our children vulnerable to false information, grooming, exploitation, bullying, radicalisation and generally unsuitable content. This leaves us, their trusted adults, to police what they come into contact with.

This half-termly newsletter aims to give the latest advice and guidance about online gaming, mobile phones, apps and social media. Together, we can ensure our children remain safe and that you, as parents can stay in control of what they access until they are of an age to decide for themselves what they access.

Smartphone free childhood support group



Peer pressure and pester power are among the reasons parents choose to allow their children to have an internet-enabled device and access to social media but there is a growing movement advocating for childhood without smartphones.

Below is a letter and attached flyer outlining their cause, being championed by one of our parents, which you may find of interest and may wish to support.

Children's use of smartphones and social media has increasingly been in the press over the last few weeks, with both parents and the government discussing the topic.

At the same time, a small group of parents here at Broke Hall have started discussions with the school about what actions we can take to keep our children safe.

Please read the attached flyer for more information about this and details of how you can get involved with a new Broke Hall Smartphone Free Childhood Group set up to support parents to make changes to protect our children.

Important reminder: Currently the suggested age limits for all social media apps are 13+ so should not be used until Year 8 at the earliest. WhatsApp was 16+ but they have controversially reduced this to 13+ in recent weeks.

Mobile Phones in School

We understand the reasons many parents of our oldest children prefer their child to bring a mobile phone in to school. We would like to make clear our policy on acceptable use of mobile phones.

Children should not have their mobile phones out from the time they arrive at the main entrance to the school (this area includes the bike racks, car park, on-site pathways and playgrounds). In year 6, when they get into the classroom, they should place their phones, which should be powered off, directly into the collection box which is stored safely by the teacher. This not only protects the phone from loss or damage, it also prevents accusations of misuse, including the taking of photos and videos without consent.

Please support us by reiterating our rules around mobile phones with your child.

Advice and support



For a while now, we have been publishing parent guides from **National Online Safety**. This amazing, free resource has scores of bite-sized guides designed to put you, as parents in the know. Their guides, added to every Wednesday, are available on a free, easy-to-use app. By downloading it, you will have access to many, many more pieces of useful guidance designed with you and your children's safety and wellbeing in mind. Whether you want information about the latest social media platform, setting boundaries around phone or internet use, mental health concerns or how to set up parental controls, this app has what you are looking for. Just search **National Online Safety** wherever you get your apps.

Acceptable Use Agreement

Parents and school are working in partnership to teach all our children about to behave appropriately and how to stay safe online. Here is a reminder of our acceptable use agreement that all parents and carers have signed when their child joined the school.

By following this agreement, parents will be demonstrating positive online behaviours for their children and other members of the school community. We thank you for your support in this.

Acceptable use of the internet: agreement for parents and carers

Name of parent/carer:

Name of child:

Online channels are an important way for parents/carers to communicate with, or about, our schools.

The schools use the following channels:

- Social Media
- Email/text groups for parents (for school announcements and information)
- Our virtual learning platform

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, I will:

- Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful of other parents/carers and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the schools' official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the schools' complaints procedure

I will not:

- Use private groups, Facebook pages, or personal social media to complain about or criticise members of staff. This is not constructive and the school can't improve or address issues if they aren't raised in an appropriate way
- Use private groups, Facebook pages, or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a behaviour issue involving other pupils. I will contact the school and speak to the appropriate member of staff if I am aware of a specific behaviour issue or incident
- Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than my own, unless I have the permission of other children's parents/carers

Signed:

Date: