



# Andreas School

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21st January 2019

Dear Parents

## **Staying safe online: Years 4, 5 and 6**

We are living in an increasingly technological world and I'm sure we can all think of ways that computers, mobiles, tablets and the Internet have enhanced our lives. However, the increasing prevalence of technology does also create some difficulties. Many of you came along to our "E-safety" assemblies last year and are aware of the need for school and parents to work together to ensure our children make safe use of the Internet and conduct themselves appropriately online.

However, we have recently had some issues reported to school caused by children accessing social media or Apps and games that are not recommended for primary age children. These have mainly been related to Whats App, Instagram and Fortnite.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind parents that many social media apps, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whats App and Snapchat have an age restriction of 13 and over. These age restrictions are there for good reasons and should be considered seriously. They are provided to protect children and you need to think very carefully before allowing your child to ignore them. These restrictions are often there because children need a certain level of maturity to deal with how others behave online and to recognise and protect themselves from the dangers e.g people pretending to be someone they are not.

The UK video Standards council rate Fortnite as a PEGI 12. This is due to the: 'frequent scenes of mild violence.' It should also be noted that this PEGI rating only takes into account the content in the game and not the contact element, where players may be exposed to swearing and offensive language from strangers (or friends) in voice or on-screen text chat. Please be aware that Fortnite includes unmoderated chat (text and speech) between players and the opportunity to Live Stream. The issues we have seen recently in school related to this are:

- Arguments and falling out due to what happened online.
- Offensive language being used that they have heard on line.
- Children celebrating others misfortune and taunting them - The Floss.

All staff have told their children that we do not want to hear any conversations related to Fortnite and we would encourage parents to review whether you feel this game is appropriate for your children.

If you do choose to allow your children to access on line accounts/Apps, particularly ones where they chat to others, I would encourage you to review who they "are friends" with and what conversations are about. If they are in contact with someone who is being mean or unkind, then I would suggest they shouldn't be having contact with them.

Parents may find the following websites useful if you want some more guidance or advice:

1. NSPCC Net Aware <https://www.net-aware.org.uk>

Along with many useful points this site suggests the following tips to help keep your child safe online when playing online games:

- **Talk** to your child regularly about what they are doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen. They have conversation starters to support you when starting these conversations.
- **Explore** your child's online activities with your child. Understand why they like using them and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.
- **Agree** your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games.
- **Manage** your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe.

2. Common sense media <https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

3. <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

I would also like to ask parents to talk to their children about their use of mobile phones. Please remind them that they should not be taking photos of their friends without permission and they certainly shouldn't be posting them online. Children must remember that permission is required to share any personal information, including photographs.

Finally, the core values of Andreas School include being caring, friendly and respectful. We expect our children to uphold those values when outside school too, including when online. It is disappointing when we hear that some children have not behaved in this way so we value parents support in ensuring all our children can access technology safely and in a way that does not make them feel upset or uncomfortable. We urge parents to take matters to do with the use and abuse of the Internet and mobile phone usage very seriously.

If you have any concerns or would like clarification on any of the points in this letter, please do not hesitate to come and see me - my door is always open and I will be happy to help or advise.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Ashley  
Headteacher