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23rd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Keeping Children Safe on internet and Mobile devices

Social networking and social networking sites are part of modern life. As a school each year we are receiving more concerns regarding children's inappropriate use of social networking sites, particularly from pupils in Key Stage 2. With this factor in mind, we wanted to write to you to provide some information which we have recently received regarding these sites and which may be of use to you. Further information can also be found online including at <http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/>

The following information on social networking should be read by all parents and carers of pupils in Key Stage 2 who carry a mobile phone to/from school or use a mobile phone/social networking applications on other devices outside of school.

With the ever changing nature of social networking and the potential for these sites to be used inappropriately, we would urge parents and carers to read the following information:

- Parents and carers may not want to allow their children to access any social networking sites that allow anonymity. These sites can easily be abused. There are a number of applications that allow this and it is important that you as a parent keep up to date with such applications. Examples are 'Instagram', 'ooVoo', 'Snapchat', 'WhatsApp' and 'Ask FM'. The school will alert parents to any new applications that are brought to our attention.
- We strongly recommend that you should check your child's contact list on all of their devices and ensure that your child actually knows who all these contacts are. It is unwise for pupils to have contact with anyone they do not know or who operates under a pseudonym or an assumed name.
- If you discover that your child is being subjected to any abuse on one of these forums we advise that you keep a copy of the material and then remove all access to this forum immediately. This may require you removing access to all such applications and even temporarily removing the device from your child. Parents and carers need to feel confident in taking such action to protect their child. This should be viewed as a protective measure and not a sanction as children can be severely affected emotionally by social network abuse. If you are concerned by what has been posted on such sites we would recommend that you contact the site direct and explain what has happened. Many of the sites have a 'report abuse' option and in most cases you may find that such postings have breached the terms and conditions of use of the

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site. The sites can then decide what action to take in respect of those persons posting hurtful and abusive messages.

- The school will refer any messages which either threaten the safety of particular pupils or contain inappropriate pictures to the police for further action.

Unfortunately, as we are sure you will appreciate; Berewood Primary School cannot police the internet or protect your child from potential abuse through social networking sites. **We strongly recommend that pupils of primary school age do not use such sites – many of which require users to be aged at least 13 or even 16 when signing up.** If you decide that such sites are appropriate for your child, then we would always recommend that use of the sites is done in your presence and that such sites are not used unsupervised.

The school needs to be a neutral and safe place of learning for all pupils and we expect our parents, carers and pupils to work with us to ensure this is the case. Disputes arising in the community are not to be brought into school. We therefore ask that you please follow the information and advice given above. Please note that whilst we will always listen to concerns of parents and carers regarding social networking sites, the school may not always be able to help you in relation to social networking issues arising from children's use of these sites, as we are not recommending them for use by our primary school aged pupils. Please also note that where a pupil's use of social media brings the school's name into disrepute we will take action in line with school policy.

Parents and carers seeking further information can find details on the NSPCC website's online safety page at <https://bit.ly/1YEjRIH>

This page includes information which we hope parents and carers will find useful and helpful in managing their children's access to the social media and internet world.

If you have any queries regarding these matters, please do not hesitate to contact us through the school office or by email to office@berewoodprimary.co.uk

Yours faithfully,



Mr Ricky Leigh
Headteacher