Dear parents/carers,

As I am sure you are aware, managing your child’s internet use and in so doing their safety is now a key part of being a parent and carer in the world that our children are growing up in. Last night, I was contacted by a year 6 parent who had been made aware of a post in a whatsapp group that was a cause of concern, upsetting for children that saw it and from someone that the children in the group did not know. This has now been reported to the police who have been asked to contact the individual involved and to follow this up with them.

Whilst I was really pleased with the actions taken by both children and parents last night, this incident highlights again how vulnerable some of our children are to a world that is evolving so quickly.

Attached to the email that came out with this letter are two really good documents produced by the NSPCC in conjunction with O2. Please make some time to read them and then consider how to use them with your children.

I would urge parents of children who have different messaging apps to sit down with their children and look at the messages that they are both sending and receiving on a regular basis. In school, we talk to children about not sending anything that they wouldn’t be happy to share with myself or their parents. If your child is not happy to look at their messages with you, it would leave me wondering whether they are sending messages which they wouldn’t say to someone face to face in front of us – the impact of this is equally harmful and our children need to understand that they are still responsible for these messages and the damage they can do.

Please can you also emphasise to your children that if they send an image of themselves to another person they are no longer in control of what happens to that image. It is important that we are engaging in conversations such as these to educate our pupils about online safety and what is age appropriate online behaviour.

I would also urge all parents and carers to visit the netaware website below:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/?order=title>

This will provide you with clear reviews and age guidelines for a range of apps that your child may have on their tablet or phone. If children have downloaded apps that are not age appropriate, I would like you to remove these. Whilst you may have an

unhappy child for a short period of time, you will know that you are doing everything that you can do to keep them safe. If all of our families take the same action, the potential peer pressure related to being able to use different apps would disappear and I believe we would see children engaging better with each other and their families through conversations.

If having read this letter; looked at the ‘Share Aware’ and ‘Your Child’s Online World’ booklets and talked to your children, you would like to discuss anything further with me please let me know.

Thank you for your support.

David Bessant

Headteacher