**Horsforth School**

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**Online Safety and Mobile Phone Use Updates**

Unfortunately, this term, the Safeguarding team at school have had to manage several incidents of students using their phones to either take nude images of themselves or others or be involved in this ‘sexting’ by receiving or sending on/ sharing images or videos of youth produced sexual imagery.

These incidents have taken place out of school, but have come back into school via gossip, bullying and rumours.

School staff have a duty to safeguard and intervene with such incidents; these are criminal acts and can carry untold consequences for our young people. School has a duty to notify the police for such incidents and carry out appropriate interventions as well as sanctions.

Due to increased concerns around harmful content being shared with our students across the year groups we do ask that all parents check their child’s phone for potentially harmful and illegal material. The police have advised that anything harmful is deleted – but ideally, to enforce a factory reset on the phones which will clear potential illegal material.

We also need to highlight that if parents are the registered user of their child’s phone they are also liable for any illegal content on the phone, so it we really do urge a factory reset.

The NSPCC has also launched a new report and remove tool, for more information – please use the link: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/report-remove/>

We teach and educate all year groups about the dangers of sexting and the law around this and we will make this a priority for PSHCE lessons next half term. There is plenty of online safety tips on the school’s website under the safeguarding section for advice and tips for parents on this matter.

<https://www.horsforthschool.org/useful-information/safeguarding-student-and-parent-information/>

**What do I need to do if I am worried or concerned?**

 If you are worried about your child’s use of social media, contact school pastoralhub@horsforthschool.org or call school on 0113 2265454.

Please encourage your child to tell an adult they trust if they feel that someone or something is not right, safe or fair in terms of social media, phone use or use of the web.

If you are worried that your child has possibly been a victim of online abuse or you're worried about somebody else you can also report this to CEOP online at [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre). Designated Safeguarding staff are also on hand at school to take your calls. Call the main school and ask to speak to you a DSO.

Along with this email we have attached a guide to sexting for more information.

We hope you find this useful.

Kind regards

Horsforth School Safeguarding Team.