



The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



*Chair of Governors: Dr A Eyden
Vice Chair of Governors: Rev D Ridley*

*"if you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible."
(Matthew: 17 v20)*

The Downs CEP School

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Safeguarding Lead: Mr M Turner*

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30th September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

In our increasingly digital age it is more important than ever to protect and keep our children safe online and in the virtual world. Alongside our work teaching pupils reading, writing and math we feel it is equally important to teach them how they can stay safe online and avoid the risks.

I have written to several parents this year about children playing age inappropriate games online. The reason we contact parents about these online games is that they have a vast capacity for strangers, both adults and older children, to have unmonitored, unmoderated and unrecorded conversations with children whilst they play. Whilst you would not allow strangers to take our child out of the house and talk to them unsupervised these games over the virtual equivalent. Being virtual does not make it any less dangerous.

Some people assume that games such as 'Fortnite' do not display the violence or bad language or Call of Duty or Grand Theft Auto and that with their cartoony style graphics are safer for younger children. This unfortunately is not the case with any game that supports and encourages online interactions between players. Last year I dealt with several incidents where inappropriate messages or images were passed to children by persons they had met online in games.

To encourage you to talk with your child about what to do if they find themselves in difficult situations online the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) agency produces a number of short videos, available from www.thinkuknow.co.uk, aimed at children from age 4 upwards. The videos talk about staying safe online, what to do if something online worries them and what to do if strangers try to contact them online. I would encourage all our parents to explore the resources available on the site.

At school we will continue to use CEOP and similar resources to encourage the children to act safely and sensibly online. If you would like any specific advice or support please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Mr Turner
Safeguarding Officer

