



# HIGHSHORE SCHOOL

10 October 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Re online safety**

*The content of this letter is being sent to the parents from a number of Southwark secondary schools or academies.*

We are writing to reinforce what we need to do together to ensure that every pupil in any one of our schools is safe and happy throughout the year and during the school holidays. Some of the information below may seem shocking, or may not seem relevant to your child, but it is essential that you take the time to read it and do all you can to follow the advice given. In a special school such as Highshore our pupils can be particularly vulnerable.

## **Sexual Exploitation and Bullying**

This takes many forms, but the most common issue is related to exploitation and inappropriate images being circulated on social media. Children as young as 6 have been found to have inappropriate images on their phones or have sent provocative images of themselves through social media. For example, an image of a girl posing in clothes that might be revealing will and does cause immense distress and can be distributed across the web. Such activity is extremely dangerous and places *all* children and young people at risk. All schools are having to deal with bullying issues or arguments related to the transfer and distribution of these images. Similarly, there is a marked increase in 'sexting': which involves sending text messages that are of a sexual nature. Again, these are highly inappropriate for our young people and are the cause of great upset and embarrassment.

## **What do we need you to do to ensure your child is safe?**

### **CHECK YOU CHILD'S PHONE, IPAD AND LAP TOP!**

1. Check the content of their social media whether that be Facebook, Instagram or any other social media site.
2. Check their phones and other sources regularly and randomly, also to ensure that they are not receiving any such images or texts.
3. Talk to them about the issues and explain the dangers and possible consequences.
4. Use the resources enclosed and these web sites to help you and your children.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)  
[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)  
<https://www.gov.uk>

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-providers-of-social-media-and-interactive-services>)

### **What are we doing about it?**

1. So far this year, we have had a whole school assembly on being safe at school. Classes are also having class assemblies on staying safe and key stage assemblies on online safety
2. We have provided training for colleagues on this matter
3. We have PHSE lessons for all pupils
4. We have an online safety policy and provide lessons on online safety to pupils
5. We provide support for any pupil who has been distressed by such incidents
6. We have worked with families where concerns have been raised
7. We would discuss any issues with the police if appropriate

As a group of Southwark Secondary Schools, we are working together to address this challenge, which includes working with relevant agencies and with the police.

We all want to ensure that your child is safe and happy – this is an absolute priority. We need to work together on this issue to prevent young people being in vulnerable situations and placing themselves at risk.

We will be running more training for parents at Highshore on online safety this year. Please do your best to attend. Please speak to Julia, Sally, Kevin or me if you have any concerns or questions.

Thank you for your continuing support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Eileen Ollieuz  
Headteacher