



19 March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may have heard about fight sites being set up on the internet so that young people comment upon and promote this negative behaviour. How would you feel if one of your children stood by and watched a friend, sibling or even an acquaintance from school be beaten up in a fight and recorded it on their mobile phone? Unfortunately, this is a scenario that we, have to deal with on occasion.

Social media sites such as instagram and snapchat have accounts setup by other young people that are dedicated to promoting fights between under age students. The purpose of these accounts is to try and make sure the next fight posted gets more likes and views than the previous fight. As a school whenever we hear/are informed of such media going up on an account we inform the provider, however some are better than others at pulling the footage down.

We need to ask for your help again, as too many students are carrying phones that are multimedia enabled and can not only record such footage, but can "like" it. There have been incidents on these fight accounts, where students have recorded the incidents and then posted them, with a view for the footage to be used to get the victim help, or to make sure that if anything bad happened it was recorded.

During many of the most recent terror attacks, we have seen everyday people standing up to be counted and either protecting the wounded or making safe those seeking refuge from such attacks. This shows the best in people. Unfortunately, some students are creating crowds of onlookers for people who want to be filmed fighting and furthermore make it very difficult for anyone caught in such a situation to pull out or stop, as otherwise they lose face.

Sadly, all of the above activity is funded by those paying the bills of these student's mobile phones, often without even realising they are doing it. Frequently, the reason for a parent or carer wanting their child to carry a mobile phone, will be for one of safety. However, I wonder how much of the £20 to £40 a month mobile phone bill is actually spent on calls or texts for safety reasons? I wonder as a parent or carer how many actual, true friends you have, and I wonder how this compares to the 100's of contacts your child maintains through their contact list, snapchat and instagram.

Quite often parents or carers have not grown up with social media, but have significant life experience to determine what is the right and wrong use of social media. For young people, who are often kept in by their parents for safety reasons, they know nothing other than social media, but unfortunately have not developed the life experiences to deal with such media. Furthermore, these young people will not be guided by their parents or carers as to what is right or wrong on social media as their parents do not understand it, or it is felt as an invasion of privacy. Young people have no respite from what is going on as they are targeted for updates 24/7. It used to be that a young person left school at 3.15pm and would hear no more from it until 8.40 the next day, but today there is no letup in the playground chatter. This is partly the reason for the significant rise in mental health cases.

A mobile phone is not a human right, but a device that is a privilege. Like all privileges, if it is abused it should be removed. Please use this correspondence as a time to go back and speak to your child, to look at their contact list and to explore what they have liked/are following as a story in snapchat or on instagram. I hope that what you find in such a discussion is legal and not damaging, however, I think you may be surprised what you are funding on a

monthly basis. This is not a time to chastise your child, but a time to discuss what they are up to and their responsibilities in making society work for all.

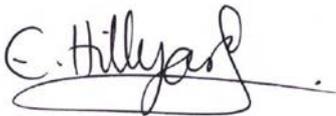
At Cox Green School we recognise there are such things as 'fight pages', but also recognise that without people liking them, or providing an audience then they do not exist for very long.

We encourage you to establish rules and guidelines to ensure the safety of your child while on the Internet. Some Web sites offer parental or family guidance for Internet safety as well as information about all the latest apps; for example, NSPCC located online at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Lastly, we would add that online activity is seriously depriving some of our students of sleep as they take their electronic devices to their rooms and a number of apps, e.g. snapchat, reward users to be the last one to reply in a conversation thread. Good practice is that mobile devices are turned off and left in the kitchen overnight. Periods of detox from electronic devices promotes improved mental health. One of the best things you can do for your child is to ensure their laptops, mobiles, tablets, TVs and consoles are left outside their bedrooms before they go to sleep.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in keeping our students safe. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact your child's Form Tutor, Head of year, or SAFE Manager.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Hillyard', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ed Hillyard
Deputy Head