

Langley Park School for Girls

Enabling everyone to thrive – acting with kindness, determination and respect.



Headteacher: Mr S Whittle, MA (Cantab), PGCE, NPQH

11 December 2024

Dear Families,

Online Safety Alert – Staying Vigilant on Social Media and Networking Platforms

Last week, our young people were shown a pre-recorded assembly by Mr Whittle and Mrs Hurley focused on safeguarding, with reminders about key safety practices within our school community. The assembly highlighted important topics:

- What safeguarding is and why it is essential for our school.
- A reminder of the staff on the safeguarding team along with key pastoral staff who are available to support students.
- Reinforcing the importance of wearing lanyards for identification and safety while on the school site.
- Following our newly implemented one-way system to ensure the safe movement of everyone around school.
- A reminder about prohibited items to maintain a secure learning environment.
- Information about our anti-bullying pledge, which all students will be taking as part of our commitment to kindness and respect.
- Signposting the support available both within and outside of school for those in need.

As always, we encourage you to discuss these important reminders with your child and to support them in adhering to these measures.

As part of our ongoing safeguarding efforts, we want to make you aware of a specific concern that has come to light. Whilst this might have more relevance for our older students, we want to share the below with all families.

We are aware of a LinkedIn account where an individual may be using the platform to build inappropriate relationships with young people. Posing as a mentor or coach, they appear to be gaining trust through professional networking channels. An additional letter has been shared with families of those young people who have connections with the account.

While platforms like LinkedIn can provide valuable opportunities for learning and networking, this situation serves as a reminder of the importance of remaining cautious. We encourage parents and carers to regularly discuss online safety with their children and to review their activity across all platforms.

Understanding the Risks – The 4 Cs of Online Safety

As parents and carers, it's important to understand the key areas of risk when children navigate the online world. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* highlights four categories of online risks, known as the **4 Cs**, to help us better protect young people:

- **Content:** The type of material children may encounter online, such as harmful, inappropriate, or misleading information. This can include violent imagery, extremist content, or misinformation.
- **Contact:** The danger posed by individuals who may attempt to engage with children inappropriately, including grooming or exploitation.
- **Conduct:** How children behave online, such as oversharing personal information, engaging in risky activities, or participating in harmful online challenges.
- **Commerce:** The financial risks children face online, including scams, phishing attempts, and exploitation through in-app purchases or fraudulent websites.

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By being aware of these risks, we can help our children navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Regular conversations about their online experiences, alongside monitoring and setting boundaries, can go a long way in keeping them safe.

To help ensure your child's safety online, here are some recommendations/actions;

1. **Review Privacy Settings** - Teach your child to limit the visibility of their profiles to trusted connections only and to avoid sharing personal information.
2. **Verify Connections** - Remind your child to only connect with individuals they know or whose credentials can be verified.
3. **Monitor Online Activity** - Regularly check your child's connections and communication on professional and social media platforms.
4. **Discuss Online Risks** - Have open conversations about the risks of online interactions, such as inappropriate contact, phishing attempts, or scams.
5. **Block and Report suspicious behaviour** - Teach your child how to block and report suspicious accounts or messages.

Below are some trusted resources to help you and your child navigate online safety:

- **National Online Safety:** www.nationalonlinesafety.com - Provides advice and guides for parents and children on a wide range of online safety topics.
- **ThinkUKnow:** www.thinkuknow.co.uk - A resource by CEOP offering age-appropriate advice on staying safe online.
- **Childnet:** www.childnet.com - Offers tips and tools for families to promote online safety.
- **Internet Matters:** www.internetmatters.org - Helps parents understand the digital world and guide children's online activity.

We are working closely with our safeguarding team and external authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students. If you or your child encounters any suspicious behaviour online, please do not hesitate to report it to the platform and if you have any specific concerns, please contact us at safeguardingteam@lpgs.bromley.sch.uk.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring the safety of all our young people online.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs R Hurley
Designated Safeguarding Lead