

6 March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **Online Safety**

As you know, St Margaret's is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding for all the young people we educate.

At a Governors' meeting shortly after half-term we decided it would be worthwhile to hold an open meeting for any interested parents on the subject of **Online Safety**. On one hand, the rapid development of the internet over the last 20 years or so has had a significant, and generally positive, impact on all of our lives. On the other hand, however, it has also introduced significant risks of harm. As parents and educators we all have a shared responsibility to keep our young people safe – which means we all need to understand the risks posed by online activity, and the steps we need to take to protect those for whom we care.

The need for such an Online Safety evening was brought into sharp focus by an incident that took place shortly after the Governors' meeting. A younger pupil reported that he had received indecent images from an adult male through a social media app called ooVoo, and other pupils reported that the same adult had tried to ring them. We have informed the parents of the boys involved, and also the police, who are investigating the incident as a matter of priority.

We have also taken the opportunity to reiterate online safety messages with all our young people; for example, we have advised them to check their app privacy settings to ensure that they cannot be contacted by strangers. You may wish to take the opportunity to reinforce those messages with your son or daughter too, and perhaps check that their app privacy settings are appropriate. Further support for parents can be found on our [website](#), which includes a link to Vodafone's *Digital Parenting magazine*, another excellent source of information.

Our Online Safety evening for parents will be held from **6pm to 7pm on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March**. I am delighted to be able to advise you that Paul Bradshaw, a Senior School Improvement Officer with Liverpool who specialises in new technologies and online safety, will be leading the evening. I would urge you to attend so that we can all play our part in keeping our young people safe.

As ever, if you have any concerns about your child's safety (either online or otherwise), or if I or any of the safeguarding team can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Brierley  
Principal