



St John's Highbury Vale C of E Primary School

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Interim Head of School: Mrs Lindsey Hodgson

Interim Executive Head: Mrs Tonnie Read

4th March, 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

I am writing to inform you of a safeguarding issue which has presented in Year 5. Overheard conversation between the children in class, and then subsequently, direct conversations with Mr Rudd, have brought to light some online safety issues which we are particularly worried about.

The children have shared that they have been playing in public matches on the online game, Fortnite. This means the children are playing against strangers they do not know. In some cases, the strangers are saying rude and unpleasant things to the children. We have spoken to the children about making sure that they are only playing private games, where only those who are invited can take part. As the game is PEGI 12, Mr Rudd has advised the children that they should be wary of who they are playing against, as we don't always know if people are who they say they are.

It has also come to our attention that there has been inappropriate behaviour within matches played with other class members, too. Whilst these may currently be isolated incidents, we feel it is important to note that if these were to become repeated incidents, this becomes a form of online bullying.

We are planning on carrying out an online safety training session with the class, and have attached the PowerPoint on online safety, which Mrs Read delivered at the recent parents forum, on Tuesday 23rd February. We would really appreciate it if you could have a conversation with your child, if you know they use the game Fornite, or any other online game, and make sure they are protected from any possible harm they may come to in an online forum. We appreciate that it is your decision as parents what games your child is allowed to play, and whether it is suitable for their age, however, we strongly urge you to consider if they should be left alone to play, or if there is a possibility of some parental restrictions being added. We have a duty of care to keep the children safe, and to inform you of any concerns we have around their safety.

If you wish to discuss this further with either myself or Mr Rudd, please contact us via the school office and we will be in touch.

Kind regards,

Mrs Lindsey Hodgson

Interim Head of School

