



All Parents and Carers

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Dear Parent/Carer

E-SAFETY

The safety of our children is a high priority for all parents, carers and the local authority. Increasingly there are concerns raised in the media and elsewhere regarding how safe children are online. Included with this letter is a useful factsheet from CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) through their education website <https://www.thinkyounow.co.uk> that you may find helpful.

By December this year, all schools in the Western Isles will have conducted a '360° Safe' audit <https://360safescotland.org.uk/>, which is an e-safety self review tool.

All children and young people attending school have Glow accounts. Glow is the Scotland wide intranet and provides a safe online platform for learning, including social media tools such as 'Yammer' which functions in a similar way to Facebook. The use of Glow and tools such as Yammer will allow our students to learn how to use, and understand that social media can be useful in an educational and work context.

Head teachers in both Primary and Secondary schools deal with instances of abusive behaviour between pupils using social media all too often. The immediacy of posting on social media often does not allow for reflection. Comments made, or pictures posted can be very hurtful, often more than intended. Children and young people can also put themselves at risk without realising it. The latest craze with 'Pokémon Go' is an example of a great game, that can leave children at risk if not treated with care and thought.

As per the factsheet issued with this letter, I would encourage all parents and carers to spend some time with their children talking about the sites they visit and what they do online. It would also be helpful for parents and carers to lead by example and discuss and show their children their own posts etc. where you have an account with Facebook, Twitter etc.

Later this session we will be launching our new Anti-bullying Policy. A programme of training for all staff is included and should complement the '360° Safe' audit schools are conducting.

Yours sincerely

Allan Smithyman
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Education and Children's Services Department