

Online Safety Day

On 6th February, I was invited by Mrs Burton to a special e-safety assembly for KS2 pupils. It was a pleasure to see the children come into the hall in a quiet and orderly way and settle down to hear what Mrs Burton had to say.

Equally impressive is the care and concern shown by all the staff in ensuring that the pupils in the school are fully aware of the benefits, but also the dangers of using the Internet. Given that no child under the age of 13 should have a social media account, it was surprising how many of them put up their hands when asked who had a Facebook, Instagram or similar account. Mrs Burton emphasised that the 'stranger danger' with which they are all familiar exists equally online. They were urged **never** to give their name, age, address or details of their school to anyone online, and most certainly never arrange to meet someone whom they have met through a chat room etc.

Similarly, they were warned that whatever they posted online would always be there – even if you think it has been deleted, it will make an indelible digital footprint, which could prove harmful to future career plans if it is offensive or contravenes the law. Before posting anything, they should imagine how they would feel if someone said anything unkind or hateful to them – “ *if you wouldn't like it yourself, then don't say it about anyone else*”.

Like 'stranger-danger', bullying does not just exist in the real world but online, and increasingly cyber-bullying is subject to the same rules and laws which protect us all from harassment.

Above all, Mrs Burton emphasised that there is always someone to whom they can turn for advice, and if there is **anything** about which they feel unsure, unhappy or uncomfortable, they must tell someone – a parent or grandparent, an aunt or uncle, a friend, an older brother or sister, a teacher or any adult in school.

The assembly was followed up by a video in class about a child meeting someone online; I hope that this, together with the excellent assembly will provoke lively and open discussion in families and that all adults together, prepare our children to be safe and keep others safe in an increasingly digitised world.

Lynda Redfern