**Newsletter 5 – February 2019**

**Headteacher’s Update**

It’s lovely to see all of our families back after half term in the sunshine. This time last year, it was impossible to access School Road due to the amount of snow we had – I certainly much prefer this year’s weather. Let’s hope it’s here to stay!

We had some visitors in from NSPCC this morning who did an assembly with all of our children, about how to stay safe and talk to others when things are worrying them or making them unhappy. The children joined in really well and were very respectful and sensible, and shared lots of ideas with the visitors. Year 6 then got to take part in a workshop to look at scenarios in more detail, and decide what to do about them.

We have also got another special assembly coming up at the end of March, called ‘Becoming an Upstander’, which is all about understanding bullying, how to stand up to it and how to offer helpful support to others. All of our classes will then be taking part in a workshop to learn more about this, as well as how to be confident and assertive.

**Building Works**

As I’m sure you will have seen, we have a new building project on site! These will be taking place for the rest of this academic year.

The older classrooms is the school (which are Zeta, Phi, Tau, Gamma, the Computing Suite and the two spare classrooms) are all going to be refurbished over the remaining academic year, to bring them up to the same standards as our year 3 classrooms, and those in the new build. Two rooms will be done at each time, starting with the two spare classrooms. This way, when the rooms are finished, the classes concerned can move into the brand new rooms for the remainder of the academic year.

We are expecting all rooms to be completed by September 2019. We apologise for any inconvenience while these works are taking place.

**School Phoneline**

We are currently having our phone lines updated to increase their capacity, as we are aware that at peak calling times it can be difficult for parents to get through. – especially as at the moment the phone will still sound like it rings, when it is actually engaged! We hope this change will allow you to speak to someone more quickly when you need to.

**Valentine’s Disco**

We had a great time at the discos that the Friends of Monkwick, our parent group, arranged for our children for Valentine’s Day. It was a great event and the children had a great time, and were very sensible and respectful to all our helpers. We had lots of new volunteers for this event who all worked hard to make the event a great success for the children. Thank you to all of them for their support!

**Staying Safe Online**

There are many articles in the news and on social media, warning parents about dangers online – at the moment, these are particularly in relation to the character ‘Momo’. It’s also important to be aware that children will have seen some of the warnings online and be aware of the character from seeing the same warnings and news articles that you have.

We understand that parents and carers may be concerned about this, so it’s an important time for us to share some advice from the UK Safer Internet Centre that we hope will help you to help your child stay safe online:

The internet is constantly changing, and new issues and online platforms are arising all the time. We would advise parents and carers to have an open and honest conversation with their children if they see something they don’t like or that worries them online, or if they feel unsure about what they are seeing.

It’s important that your children feel that they are able to come and talk to you about any issues they may be having online. Although it may seem difficult to have this conversation, the UK Safer Internet Centre has [**conversation starters that can help you to start a discussion with your family about their time online**](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/have-conversation).

Other things to consider to keep your child safe online are:

**Age restrictions:** Think about the age restrictions on the sites your family use.  [Net Aware](http://www.net-aware.org.uk/) is a great site to see what other parents think of the age rating on different platforms, so that you can make an informed decision of whether your family should be using them. Please remember that primary aged children are below the age restrictions for Whatsapp (which is 16+) and Fortnite (which has a PEGI of 12+).

**Privacy setting:** Most social networking sites have privacy settings to help you manage the content you share and who you share it with; you can decide if you want your posts to be shared with your online friends and followers only or with the public. You can also decide who can contact you on sites you use within the privacy settings.

**Block and report:** Make sure your child knows that they can block or report any user that makes them feel uncomfortable online. Childnet have some guidance on [how to make reports on different websites.](http://www.childnet.com/resources/how-to-make-a-report)

**Supervision on YouTube:** YouTube is a video platform geared towards adults, not young children. While many types of content goes against their policies, there is a great deal of permitted adult content on the site, and prohibited content may still be present as well. As such, young children should *always* be supervised if a parent allows them to use YouTube, so a parent can intervene if a child stumbles on adult content. YouTube kids is an app for phones or tablets that filters out adult themed content and is much safer than the standard YouTube platform. However adult content can still make its way onto YouTube Kids, so younger children should still be supervised if allowed on this app.

**Other helpful links:**

* [Parents’ Guide to Technology](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-technology) gives advice about smartphones, gaming devices, tablets and other internet-connected devices. There is also a parents’ guide to the [parental controls offered by your home internet provide](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parental-controls-offered-your-home-internet-provider)r.
* With [Social Media Guides](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides) you can find out more about the safety features available on these popular social networks.