



MAIDEN ERLEGH

CHILTERN EDGE

Headteacher: Mr A. Hartley
BA (Hons), PGCE

Reades Lane, Sonning Common,
Reading, RG4 9LN
0118 972 1500
meceoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org
www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk

01 July 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

I hope you are keeping safe and well. I am writing to you today regarding some safeguarding concerns that have come to light this week. If an individual student has been affected, the relevant parent and student have been spoken to already. However, it is important that as parents you are aware of any "trends" that occur amongst our young people so we can all work together to keep them safe. It is also worth stating that these issues are affecting just a few of our students, but we feel it is best practice to inform you as parents and to work with you therefore ensuring our students are kept as safe as possible, both at school and at home.

1) Year 7

I have been made aware that there is a large WhatsApp group for this year group. A number of students have reported unkind messages being sent on this group. It has also come to light that this group contains students from other schools and potentially older students, perhaps even adults, although the details are unclear. It is important that your child knows who they are talking to online. I would therefore suggest that you have a conversation with your child about any groups they have joined on WhatsApp and ask that they remove themselves from any groups that contain unknown people.

2) Year 8

I have been dealing with a potential case of "sexting" this week. "Sexting" involves indecent images and videos being shared online / via social media. This particular case involves "nudes" being shared in a large Snapchat group and stored in a "for my eyes only" folder on the app. Students have had previous assemblies about sexting. As a reminder it is illegal to take, send, share or save any image or video that contains indecent images of a child. This includes a child taking a photo of themselves. A child is someone under the age of 18. Anyone aware of any images like this must report it to a trusted adult. Whilst individuals involved have been spoken to and support put in place, please have a conversation with your child to reiterate the law around "sexting" and the potential consequences.

3) Year 10

I have had reports this week of students being involved in sniffing 'Sharpie' marker pens and they may be daring each other to do this. The term for this is "huffing" and may have a similar effect to inhaling other solvents, such as glue or aerosols. It can be very dangerous. Again, please speak with your child about the dangers of doing this. The following website has information regarding a variety of solvents:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/glues-gases-and-aerosols?a=Solvents#the-risks>

Thank you for taking the time to talk to your child about these matters. All this information will also be posted in the relevant year group space on Google Classroom, so they can access the information themselves as well.

If you have any concerns about your child's welfare, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

n.benham1@maidenerleghtrust.org

Alternatively, you may contact their Head of Year or Tutor.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Benham
Assistant Headteacher