



ST. MARY'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr D Miller

27th November 2017

Dear Parents & Carers,

I would like to remind parents that the appropriate way to address any concern that they may have is by making an appointment to speak directly to the class teacher, key stage leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. **It is not helpful to voice concerns on social media or via 'playground gossip' as this almost always aggravates a situation and potentially undermines the working relationship between parents and the school.**

As a school, we will always take concerns seriously and will address them according to our agreed policies and procedures, bearing in mind that there are often different viewpoints, perspectives and interpretations in any one incident. We will always discuss how we intend to proceed and we hope that parents who have chosen to send their child to our school respect that this is how we will deal with issues and support the decisions or actions taken by school staff.

As a Catholic school, we view every single child as unique, precious and loved. We know that all children make mistakes, fall out with each other and often fail to do the right thing; they also have the right to forgiveness and reconciliation as they learn how to behave and conduct themselves in a stressful and ever changing world. Our approach to dealing with incidents is underpinned by this belief and not by 'labelling' a child and issuing punishments. I am quite certain that all parents would hope for their child to be treated in a sensitive and caring manner should they fail to do the right thing. A copy of our behaviour policy will be circulated at parent's evening reinforcing this view.

I would remind parents that derogatory comments about the school or members of staff on social media will not be tolerated. If necessary, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Legal Department and action taken. There are laws relating to the use of social media and if parents ignore the legislation then we will be forced to seek legal advice and take matters further. The school will also expect the parent responsible to remove the comments and the school will report the defamatory comments to the social networking site (.g. Facebook etc).



The use of social media to make derogatory comments about the school, pupils and also staff members is not in the interests of the children or the school community as a whole. The school has a duty, not only to pupils, but also to staff members to keep them safe from abuse, threats and violence. This includes cyber abuse and defamatory comments on social media. It is a criminal offence under the *Malicious Communications Act 1998* for parents to send another person a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys:

- A message which is indecent or grossly offensive.
- A threat.
- Information which is false and known to or believed to be false by the sender.

People are guilty of the offence where they intend to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or any other person.

The school hopes that all issues can be resolved in a reasonable manner without the need for comments to be posted on social media. **St Mary's has a zero tolerance approach to the aforementioned comments being posted online.**

Yours Faithfully,

Mr D. Miller
Headteacher

Mrs M. Harris
Chair of Governors

