

HG/PP/1310  
13.10.2011

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Years 5 & 6 Parents - We need your support!**

Learning at school is being disrupted because of children falling out due to incidents **outside** of school. Much of the trouble is caused by unkind comments or gossip on MSN which is impossible for us to police yet we are increasingly spending a great deal of time dealing with the consequences and trying to mediate the resulting issues.

We are also finding children are covering up the truth or complaining to teachers or their parents if they have been questioned about these incidents. For example, a teacher informs a group of girls that if this unkind behaviour continues we will have to talk to parents; the child complains to the parent about unfair treatment and the parent is then on the phone to the school. This undermines my staff's authority and I feel we are all being manipulated.

I am writing to all our Year 5/6 parents and asking for support because I am seriously concerned about this development. If left unchecked I fear for the negative behaviour being learnt and the unpleasant characters developing.

I spoke to all the girls two weeks ago about the seriousness of the situation. I will speak to all the children again. Please would you talk to your son or daughter about the seriousness of the **unacceptable** behaviour and monitor MSN if your child has access. Many of the unpleasant comments result from the fact that some of the parents dislike each other and children mirror their attitudes.

I expect children to enter school each day ready to learn. When they are worried or upset, learning is impossible.

**Whilst I understand that most children are not involved but may be affected**, the only way to stamp out this nasty new trend of internet gossip/bullying is to bring the situation out into the open and together as parents and staff, insist that it stops **now**.

Thank you for all your support. We will inform individual parents if their child is involved from now on. Our difficulty arises when the child and then parents hotly deny any involvement in saying unkind comments, either by MSN or by word of mouth. Several boys are guilty of stirring up feelings by repeating/saying unkind comments, about gender preference, racial and physical appearance.

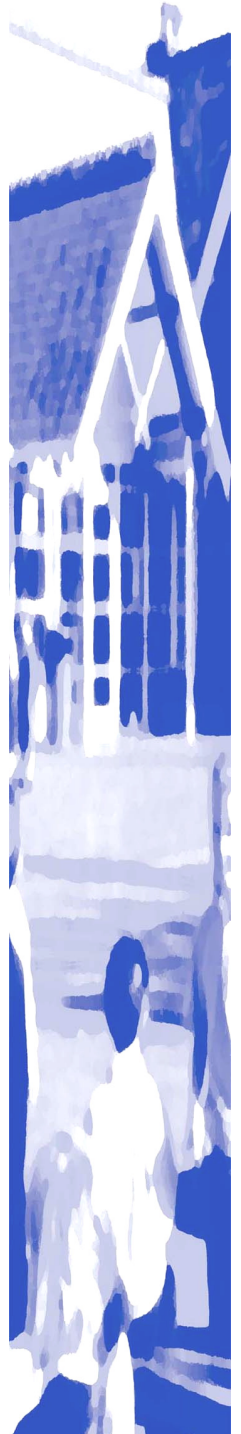
I am seriously concerned for the future of our young people, with access to text, MSN and Facebook (which has a minimum registration age limit of 13 years) which in turn allows cyber bullying to exist. **I want all our children to be safe and confident learners.**

I thank you in advance for your support in this issue and hope that my next correspondence will be of a lighter, brighter context!

Best wishes  
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