

# St Mark's Safeguarding Newsletter - Spring 2021

There are a number of things to update you all on this term, with so much going on in the world and the increased reliance on technology for all of the home learning which has been taking place.



## Travel Passports

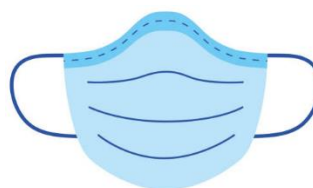
First of all, the return of all children to school has seen a huge increase in traffic, particularly at drop off and pick up times. The area immediately around our school grounds doesn't lend itself to lots of parking and we have already witnessed a number of close calls involving cars and pedestrians.

Consequently, we actively encourage anyone who can avoid using their cars to do so please. We want to keep the whole community safe and anything we can do to reduce congestion is a positive move.

After Easter, we are going to introduce 'Travel Passports' for all children. These are to encourage all pupils to walk to school where possible. Having said that, we understand that it is not possible for everyone to walk. Therefore, we are going to promote a 'park and walk' scheme where you park your car and walk the last part of the journey. This will still help reduce congestion immediately outside of school, and these children will still receive the reward on their travel passports having walked for part of their journey. There will be numerous incentives and prizes to win, which will all be discussed with the children.

Next week (week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March) a bike rack is being installed opposite the prayer garden to encourage children to cycle to school. We will be exploring 'Bikeability' sessions for our older children for the near future. We want to encourage as many children as we can to cycle safely to school and leave their bikes securely on site.

Please support us in making our community a safer place. We also think this scheme will increase physical and mental wellbeing, encouraging fresh air and having opportunities for more conversations when walking to and from school.



## Masks

It is **compulsory** for all adults (and indeed everyone over the age of 12) to wear masks whilst on our school site. Please also maintain social distancing from all people outside of your own

household or bubble **at all times**. This is in order to keep everybody as safe and protected from Covid-19 as possible.

If you do forget your mask on any occasion, we are providing disposable masks to pick up and wear at the gates. Alternatively, please stay outside the school grounds and allow your child to walk in or out independently.

If for medical reasons you are exempt from wearing a mask, please either wear your lanyard to confirm this, or provide evidence to us via email or at the school office.

## Use of Social Media

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we are aware that many children are accessing various forms of social media more than ever before. Whilst we fully understand the benefits of this in terms of emotional wellbeing and staying in touch with friends and family, there are also a number of risks to be aware of.

### - **Videos**

The local authority have made us aware that children posting videos online is becoming more of a safeguarding concern. Some children actually have their own YouTube channels, which we would strongly advise against for anyone of primary school age.

Making and posting videos can be fun, but it can also make children vulnerable. The advice regarding videos is to avoid bedrooms if at all possible. Children should not reveal any personal information either verbally or through what can be seen in the background. We also strongly recommend that any recordings carried out are under adult supervision.

### - **Apps**

Again, we are aware of the importance of socialising during the pandemic in whatever way we can and the exceptional circumstances in which we've all been operating. Use of various Apps needs to be a parental decision based on lots of factors. However, it is important to make everyone aware that primary aged children are considered too young for the use of the majority of social media apps. If you do allow their use, please monitor it, as social media can be a dangerous place.

### - **Digital Footprint**

Finally, we'd like to mention that everyone who goes online creates a 'digital footprint'. This means that there will always be a record somewhere of everything you ever post, share or comment on online. Even if you later delete something, the record of its existence still remains. It is so easy to save or 'screen shot' information these days.

Please therefore be very careful online. Think of any potential consequences, or how your actions might make others feel before you post anything.

**There is more information about Safeguarding on our school website.**