



**Headteacher**

Ranjit Berdesha BSc (Hons)

Heston Road

Heston

Hounslow

TW5 0QR

**T:** 020 8572 1931

**E:** [info@hestoncs.org](mailto:info@hestoncs.org)

**W:** [www.hestoncommunityschool.co.uk](http://www.hestoncommunityschool.co.uk)

19 March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Seeing and sharing scary things online**

Keeping children safe is a top priority at Heston Community School, whether on School premises or beyond and this, of course, extends to the online world [although actually our online and offline lives are so blurred that it's not always helpful to use this distinction].

Online safety or digital resilience is a whole-school effort: it is embedded throughout the curriculum, explicitly in subjects like PSHE and Computing, but also taught in all subjects and topics throughout the year. And of course, it is very much part of our safeguarding focus given the real risks and dangers which exist online.

In all we do, however, we like to focus on the positives of the online world. We recognise that technology is here to stay and the young people at our School live, love and learn through their tech.

If you want to find out more about the realities of life online for young people, which includes a lot about the risks, you may wish to read the results of a survey of 40,000 UK schoolchildren at [hopesandstreams.lqfl.net](http://hopesandstreams.lqfl.net).

What we would like to encourage you to do, though, is to talk to your children about what they get up to online. The survey showed us that they want to talk to you and trust your life experience and advice, so it doesn't matter if you've never played their games, heard of their apps or got a virtual reality headset!

Please take time to talk to them over the next few weeks about what they do on their devices and with whom, what they love, and what worries them. Why not get them to show or teach you how to use one of their apps, sites or games? The key thing is to stay positive, be real about the risks and make sure they know who they can talk to if they are unsure.

There are plenty of things to be aware of online, but if you are warning them about risks and dangers, please don't show them scary images or tell them the names of 'bad apps' [all apps can be good or bad] or challenges/dares to avoid. If you do, that can scare them even more or encourage them to go and research it later!

Here are a few links that may be helpful for you:

- [apps.lgfl.net](http://apps.lgfl.net)
- [screentime.lgfl.net](http://screentime.lgfl.net)
- [parentsafe.lgfl.net](http://parentsafe.lgfl.net)

In the past week there have been many press stories about a particular nasty challenge circulating with a scary image on social media. These stories are based on an urban myth / hoax which circulates every few months. Whether that is the case or not, please do not show any scary images from the newspapers to your children in order to talk about it, and do not mention the challenge by name. Instead, as above, talk about what to do if they see something scary or someone dares them to do something stupid or dangerous; ask them if they would tell someone and who; make sure they know never to forward these things to their classmates.

Let's work together to avoid unnecessary sleepless nights.

Best wishes



**Margot Currie**  
**Assistant Headteacher**