Thursday 21st October 2021

**Important Online Safety update**

Dear Parents/ Carers,

At Stratford Primary, we put the safeguarding of children at the centre and heart of all that we do and online safety, both at school and at home, is of paramount importance given the digital world that children are so familiar with and spend so much time in. Online safety runs through all aspects of the curriculum but we also want to make that those principles that keep them safe in school, whenever they are online, are reinforced at home. We recognise that the internet has so much to offer and plays a key role in education but we must make sure that children are using it responsibly and respectfully.

We aim to be proactive, as well as sometimes reactive, so we regularly send out information to parents which will either be on a specific issue, but also regular reminders on various topics including age restrictions for games; apps; films and television.

You may be aware of a new Netflix series, Squid Game, which is trending across different online platforms; we are also aware that the influence of the programme has crossed over onto TikTok, Roblox and Minecraft, so the children may have had their interest piqued through those media to search out the original. There has also been a slew of content created – ranging from memes to apps – that convey the violence of the show, so it is important for parents, carers and educators to understand the basis of Squid Game and the potential risks to young people who might be exposed to it. Squid Game is something aimed at adults and certainly not young children.

**What are the hazards for children?**

Squid Game’s 15 rating has not prevented clips and images from the show being uploaded onto social media sites such as TikTok, with the #SquidGame hashtag being viewed more than 22.8 billion times. There have been reports of children who have accounts on these platforms inadvertently viewing gory, explicit scenes from the programme, and parents and carers should be mindful of the prevalence of these uploads.

The popularity of the programme has also led to online challenges based on various scenes, which see people taking part in seemingly innocent children’s games. On the show, however, characters are executed if they fail in the game – and videos of people pretending to kill each other after competing in Squid Game-style contests are going viral on social media, where they are easily accessible to children

If you see your child replicating the challenges from the show or hear them talking about scenes and characters from Squid Game, it would be a timely opportunity to discuss with them that the programme is not intended for children, that much of the content would be inappropriate for their age, and that the violence in the series is very realistic and often upsetting.

I have attached a useful link to the National Online Safety website for further information:

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/wakeupwednesday/squid-game-trending-across-platforms-what-parents-need-to-know>

Kind regards

Mrs L Withers

Head of School