

31 January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Thank you to those who attended our e-safety engage evening before the Christmas break.

This letter has been sent to parent/carers of students at The Ruth Gorse Academy to raise an issue that you may have heard about in the Leeds area involving primary age children. Whilst the incident did not in any way link with The Ruth Gorse Academy, concerned parents within Leeds have reported this within primary schools and we wanted to ensure that you have the most up to date information regarding how to keep your child safe online. The incident that some families may be aware of is now being investigated by West Yorkshire Police.

This incident has highlighted a number of safeguarding issues raised recently about smartphone apps, including Live.ly, ooVoo, and music.ly, amongst others. These apps are supposed to only be able to access contacts on the user's phones, but it appears that unknown individuals are able to join group chats. Therefore, these apps are not safe for children to use as there is a significant risk of inappropriate contact by unknown individuals, and possibly adults. We strongly suggest that you talk to your child/children about the dangers of these apps and ensure that they know how to set the privacy settings correctly on their phones.

If your child or yourselves experience or express concern about online activity, it must be reported to the police using 101 and by clicking on the CEOP button found on many websites including our academy website. This button links directly to the police and you can report any incident using this button on any website. It does not need to be on the website you are concerned about.

If possible, a screen shot or a mobile phone picture of the concern should be taken for reporting purposes. We have some useful links on our website on the safeguarding page and there is some useful information on the Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board and Think you Know website about online safety with some useful tips. Follow the link:

<http://www.leedslscb.org.uk/Parents-Carers-Wider-Family/Keeping-children-safe-online>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Please contact the academy if you require further information or support relating to e-safety.

Thank you again for your ongoing support to ensure that our students are safeguarded.

Your faithfully

Mrs R Taylor
Principal