



John Clifford School
Nether Street
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Telephone: 0115 9258057
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Headteacher: Janine Waring

Dear Parents and Carers of Key Stage 2 Children,

In the last three weeks we have had to deal, in school, with the following types of comments made by some older children in school:

- Body shaming
- Name calling
- Racial slurs
- Ethnic taunts
- Derogatory remarks made about parents
- Targeted verbal abuse (including the use of very adult swear words)
- Violent threats
- Threats towards siblings
- Sexualized language and gestures

All of these have happened outside of school initially, appearing on shared social media platforms and group chats. Some children are communicating outside of school in a manner that is totally inappropriate and unacceptable. We know this is happening because parents and children are coming into school with the backlash of this activity and with the evidence on their phone which highlights targets and implicates certain children. This is having a huge impact on all children's education and enjoyment of school, not to mention their mental health.

This will never apply to all children and all parents/carers, and I do not wish to cause offence but:

- Do you really know what your child is doing on their phone?
- Are you aware of the messages and voice notes that they are sending and receiving?
- Have you checked that what your child is seeing and sending is age appropriate?
- Do you know who is influencing your child on social media and what they stand for?
- Are you aware that your child may be a victim of peer pressure or online bullying?
- Are you aware that your child may be a perpetrator or instigator of online bullying?

These are hard-hitting questions but ones that can only be answered if you check your child's phone regularly. This is also the case when children are gaming and connecting with peers and those outside of the immediate JC community.



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I don't need to send you links to news articles around the devastating impact that negative social media and online bullying can have. We are all aware of the horror stories of children and young people, where parents were unaware of what was happening with their children until it was too late.

As a parent, I worry about the world in which we live and this era of advanced technology where access to all images is easier for children than it is for adults. Where children have unfiltered access to every visual imaginable and are seeing, hearing, and interacting with content that is far more adult than we would like.

Not only is there unkindness amongst some of the children's online communications, face to face behaviour is also taking much time to address. Recently, we have seen an increase in physicality amongst children. Physical response to disagreement seems to be the norm and children are displaying a lack of resilience and perspective when playing. Some children have lost a sense of responsibility for their actions and are demonstrating a lack of knowledge or care of consequence or outcome.

I am not anti-social media, and it is probably my age, but I think children see a lot of this type of interaction on the internet and through gaming. These days, it's cool for teenagers and young adults to video whatever they think will go viral and influence their popularity stakes on media platforms. Sadly, I see some of this activity replicated in the playground; not to that extent, but I do see children being mildly unkind in front of a known and bidding audience, with everyone but the subject of unkindness finding this funny. This attitude is a dangerous one to possess and one that may see the children seriously harmed outside of the safety of school.

As a school, we are part of a local Anti-Social Behaviour Group working with local schools, Broxtowe Borough Council and Beeston police to prevent young people from involving themselves in negative behaviour in our local area. You only have to walk around Beeston or Chilwell High Road to see gangs of young people causing difficulty to residents and local shop owners. As a resident, I feel passionately about this and the prevention of ex-pupils of John Clifford School becoming part of this unpoliced, unprotected and uncontrollable group. It would appear to make a mockery of all of the hard work that you and the staff have put in to support and guide the children through their primary years. At the moment, I fear that unless we work together, as parents with parents, parents with school and both with the children, we are looking at quite a rocky journey for our children through these next years and beyond when they get to secondary school. You may not agree with me and see this as *the way things*



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are these days, and although this may be the case, I do not want one of the children to become a statistic of any form of hatred, violence or worse.

In your own way, I ask that you please talk to your child about what is happening and their part in this and let's see if we can make a positive change. This week we have talked to some parents and carers about some quite specific and targeted behaviour and are taking a no-tolerance approach to this.

If you would like further information and guidance about anything related to the use of the internet, then please refer to: [Homepage - UK Safer Internet Centre](#). Similarly, If you would like to discuss anything with me then my door is open, so please do get in contact: janine.waring@johnclifford.school

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janine Waring".

Janine Waring
Headteacher