Dear Parents and Carers,

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE LETTER

As 2016 begins and we are all settling back into our school routines, it seems an opportune moment to inform you of one or two key messages that I would like you to consider this term. As they all have a connection with technology, this letter comes to you under that heading.

1. Children’s Cyber Safety

The legal framework for social media networking websites, such as Facebook and Instagram, makes it clear that the age limit restricts any child **under the age of thirteen** from owning an account. This, therefore, prohibits any child in our school community from having one.

As Head Teacher, I have a duty of care to your children that I take extremely seriously. I will, therefore, ensure compliance with the legal age limit restrictions for these sites. If I become aware that any child at Dormansland School is using a social networking site unlawfully, I will contact the site administrators to provide them with the details of the underage user, in order for the account to be de-activated.

While I appreciate that this may seem heavy-handed, I am not prepared to compromise the emotional wellbeing of children as young as those in our care when I do not believe they are well enough equipped yet to cope with the dangers of the online global community.

2. Use of Social Media Sites

As you are all well aware, the internet has become a powerful tool to connect and to share ideas and opinions. In recent years, social media sites, such as Facebook, have grown in popularity and many people now use them to communicate with family, friends and others. These sites also enable groups to
communicate even more efficiently with each other than by using email and, when used responsibly in this way, are the perfect communication platform.

At Dormansland, we encourage parents to support us and work in partnership with us to ensure that the education and emotional well being of your children remain our absolute priority.

If, at any time, you have any issue or concern about your children’s education or you feel that something has been mishandled, please can I urge you to make an appointment to come in and speak with me, your child’s class teacher or another member of the school staff.

We have worked hard, both in the real and the virtual world, to make ourselves as accessible as possible and I hope that you feel we are approachable and always willing to listen to any concerns you may have. I guarantee that we will take all concerns seriously and would ask that you do not turn to Facebook or any other social networking site to air your grievances. It is hugely discouraging to staff, has a potentially massive audience and does not afford us the opportunity to respond.

Many thanks for your continued support with this sensitive issue.

3. **Film and Games Classifications**

We have been made aware, once again, that some children are watching films or playing games with inappropriate guidance ratings. The classifications are there for a reason, to protect younger children from being exposed to inappropriate content or adult issues. We therefore urge parents to respect these classifications and ensure that children do not watch anything that is aimed at an older age group.
4. **E-safety Presentation for Parents: Thursday 28th January @ 6.30pm**

We are delighted to offer you the opportunity to come to an e-safety presentation on Thursday 28th January at 6.30pm in the school hall. This session will be run by Kate Daniels, an experienced educational practitioner from PSHE Education (http://www.psheeducation.co.uk/).

The presentation will offer you invaluable information and practical advice about how to support your children as they use internet devices. Children are now using an increasing range of devices from an early age and we feel that education for parents about how to keep them safe and encourage them to behave responsibly online is fundamental to their overall care.

The presentation will cover the following topics:

- keeping safe on social networks
- additional risks associated with mobile phones and instant messaging
- child sexual exploitation/grooming
- how to report any online harassment
- cyber bullying
- online gaming
- inappropriate websites
- parental controls

The presentation will last for about two hours, with a short coffee break during the evening. At the end of the session, there will be leaflets available for parents to take home, which will cover a number of topics on internet safety and security.

Kate will also be running e-safety workshops with the children in Years 1-6 on Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th January. We are confident that, with your attendance at the evening session and these practical workshops for the children, we will continue to do all that we can together to keep your children safe and responsible in the cyber world.

Please complete and return the slip below or email the office (info@dormansland.surrey.sch.uk) no later than **Wednesday 20th January** to confirm your attendance at this session.

*Please note that, as this workshop will be run by an external provider, we will not be authorised to video the presentation on this occasion.*
5. **Nativity Performance**

Finally, on a more positive note, I wrote a post on the school website over the Christmas holidays, informing parents that the Nativity performance, *Jesus’ Christmas Party*, is now available to download from our Vimeo site for £5.00. All proceeds from these sales will go to our PTA funds.

To purchase the download, please use the link [https://vimeo.com/149659741](https://vimeo.com/149659741) and follow the instructions on screen.

I hope it brings back many Christmassy memories of the children’s fantastic performance during these cold January evenings!

If you wish to discuss any of the points raised in this letter further with me, please make an appointment to come and see me, either via the school office or by email directly to me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S. Stokes  
Head Teacher
E-safety presentation to parents: Thursday 28th January, 6.30-8.30pm

☐ I/we will be attending the e-safety presentation:
   Number of people attending: ……

☐ I/we will be unable to attend the e-safety presentation

Name:
Child’s name: Class:
Signed:

Please return to the office by Wednesday 20th January