



Leathersellers' Federation of Schools

PRENDERGAST - Hilly Fields College  
Specialist School in Languages & Music

Headteacher  
Ms S.C. Roberts B.Ed.Hons., NPQH.



music colleges

January 2011

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to tell you about an important change of date and give you some information about concerns I have regarding use of the internet.

The next Staff Inset Day will now be held on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March** and not Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February as previously advised. I do apologise for any inconvenience caused by this change of date.

I am sure like me you are concerned with some of the developments that are taking place over the change in internet usage. In school we have had considerable difficulties with some students contact over the internet, particularly Facebook, Blackberry Messenger and similar messenger type contact. Some students have been writing extremely offensive comments on social networking sites which have impacted in school. Some students are using their phones to take photos in and out of school (some even taken in the changing rooms) and then uploading them onto the internet.

There is no access to Facebook or any other site through the school computer network, therefore the contact is made outside of school at home or on phones at school. Phones should be turned off in school; not just to silent, when we find someone using their phone we do confiscate it. However clearly it is impossible to check every girl all the time. I have made it very clear in assemblies and tutors and heads of section have repeated the message that anything that has an impact in school will be dealt with severely – I have had to exclude a number of girls recently. The police have come in to school to talk about cyber bullying and the police have been brought in for cases that have involved our students.

I realise that the majority of students use the internet wisely but it is an area that is new for us and I am concerned about the impact this is having on some students' learning. I also worry that it is making them vulnerable to inappropriate relationships. I know that these issues have caused distress to a number of our families. Dealing with the effects of the use of the internet is also taking up a huge amount of staff time which takes them away from their proper work.

I have attached a sheet of guidance from the Department of Education; please go through it carefully with your daughter/ward. I know by working together we can help support the responsible use of the internet.

Finally could I ask you to check that your daughter/ward's skirt is long enough please? We have had complaints from members of the public that some girls are wearing their skirts very short – many of the students roll up their skirts on the way home. It gives a very poor public image and could make our students vulnerable. The diary states: "the skirt should be worn at an appropriate knee length."

It is important that we know you have had the information in this letter so please complete and return the slip below to your daughter/ward's form tutor.

Yours sincerely

Ms S C Roberts  
Headteacher

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Daughter/ward's name ..... Form: .....

I confirm that I have read Ms Roberts' letter regarding the change of Inset Day and social networking.

Signature of parent/guardian: ..... Date: .....



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# Key advice to children and young people on cyberbullying

## ANTI-CYBERBULLYING CODE

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website can be really upsetting. This code gives you seven important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyberbullying and advice on how to report it when it does happen.

### 1) Always respect others

Remember that when you send a message to someone you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully, and even be accused of cyberbullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

### 2) Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your teacher or future employer to see that photo?

### 3) Treat your password like your toothbrush

Don't let *anyone* know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.

### 4) Block the Bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason!

### 5) Don't retaliate or reply!

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

### 6) Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening, and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police, to investigate the cyberbullying.

### 7) Make sure you tell

You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online.

There are people that can help:

- Tell an adult you trust, who can help you to report it to the right place, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111 in confidence.
- Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile phone operator or social network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.
- Tell your school. Your teacher or the anti-bullying co-ordinator at your school can support you and can discipline the person bullying you.

Finally, don't just stand there – if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no-one stood up for you?