

8th February 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

I wish to bring to your attention our concerns about Social Media platforms being used out of school hours by some of our students, and in particular a website called **Omegle.com** that seeks to encourage internet users to search out 'strangers' in order to engage in on-line chat. Users of the website are encouraged to communicate with such 'strangers' through text or video.

The website has a disclaimer in small print offering advice on using the site safely and the conditions of use, but my primary concern is that impressionable or naive youngsters may put themselves at risk if parents or carers are not aware that the children in their care are accessing the site. The Website's own creators write the following: '**Predators have been known to use Omegle, so please be careful.** The need for the proprietors to include this statement in their own promotional language, whether well intended or not, is a concern in itself.

Recently, some parents and carers in our community have raised their own concerns about the consequences of Hanson students using this social media platform outside of school hours. They have kindly informed us, first hand, of the deeply upsetting experiences that they have had in relation to the Omegle website. In fact, some families have had to involve the police due to inappropriate and offensive communications directed at the children in their care through use of the site.

West Yorkshire Police's Bradford District Cyber Problem Solvers have supported the families involved. Their advice to parents and carers is to monitor closely what their children are doing on social media websites and to ensure that they do not share any personal information that could put them at risk. **Under no circumstances should youngsters arrange to meet strangers they have conversed with online.**

Clearly communication and cooperation between home and school will play a significant role in ensuring our young people are safe during school hours and in the wider community on evenings, weekends and during school breaks.

To this end, in order to support parents and carers in keeping their children safe on line, Hanson School has placed supportive material on its website advising parents and young people about being responsible and safe when using social media and

the internet. In addition to this, school leaders are liaising with West Yorkshire Police to host a **Staying Safe On-Line evening, scheduled for 14th April from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. coordinated by the Bradford East Cyber Team based at Eccleshill Police Station.** The session will give practical advice to parents and carers on e-safety.

Details about the content of the session will appear on the website in due course but, in the meantime, please access the e-safety material that has been uploaded to the Hanson site by our Assistant Vice Principal for Safeguarding, Teresa Butler.

http://www.hansonacademy.org.uk/documents/download/2015_Policies/e-safety%20information%20for%20parents.pdf

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Graham Moffatt

Consultant Head Teacher