



## NOWER HILL HIGH SCHOOL

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Headteacher:  
Chris Livesey BA (Hons)

Dear Parents/Carers

### Online Safety during the Summer Holidays

During the summer holidays it is inevitable that students will be using their mobile devices and the internet more than usual and we would like to make parents and carers aware of some of the new and current online risks that students face.

You may have seen recent press coverage highlighting a concerning trend called The Blue Whale Challenge which has been claimed to be responsible for a number of teenager's deaths in Russia. Recently however we have received notification from The UK Safer Internet Centre that the 'Blue Whale Challenge' is in fact an example of a sensationalised, fake news story that has nonetheless spread and encouraged children to engage in self-harming behaviours.

Whilst it appears that the Blue Whale Challenge is a fake news story, it does highlight the power that social media has on society today and the need for parents and carers to have frequent, open and honest conversations with their children on their use of the internet and social media. Ask your children about what they're viewing online, talk through some of the issues that this trend has brought to light, such as self-harm and negative influences online.

The link below goes into more detail on this matter and provides some useful conversation starters for parents to have with their children regarding their use of the internet.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/advice-those-concerned-about-blue-whale-story>

We have recently been going into assemblies to make students aware of the growing effect of social media on young people's mental health. Research has shown that image-sharing platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat are fuelling young people's anxiety levels and feelings of inadequacy. Please join us in emphasising that the photos, blogs and posts posted on sites such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are not always what they seem and although they may suggest a "perfect lifestyle", the reality is very much everyday ordinary.

Over the summer holiday, you may also like to visit the E-Safety area of our school website, this can be found under the Parents and Carers tab on the main toolbar. We have been making updates to this area to provide support, information and guidance on the latest social media platforms and the guidelines surrounding the use of these. As I'm sure you are aware, the online world is ever changing and this area of the school website will be regularly updated to support these developments.

Finally, may we thank you for your support of the school over the past academic year and wish you and your family a very happy, restful summer break.

Yours faithfully

**Ben Ford**  
2<sup>nd</sup> I/C of Computer Studies  
E-Safety Coordinator

