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Headteacher – Mr. Rob Campbell

Dear All,

As I am sure you are all aware, schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with all their stakeholders, including parents, to safeguard children. Children are vulnerable to a wide range of risks; both those associated with the physical environments, and those associated with child protection linked to abuse or neglect.

There have been a few incidents in the past where things have happened outside of school that have given parents or other members of our community cause for concern about the safety of children. As a result, we thought it would be helpful to let all parents know of some of the things they can do to help keep children safe, and of what they should do if they are worried about a child. It is a sad reality that young people (including those of secondary school age) can be at risk from adults, or their peers – through online or direct abuse, cyber bullying, harassment or neglect. The more that we, as a community, play a collective part in keeping children safe, the better this is for all.

In school time / term time, any parent with concerns about a child should come and discuss these with myself or Mrs. Wiltshire. All disclosures are treated very carefully, and in line with guidance from safeguarding experts. To share a concern with the school does not automatically lead to extensive involvement of other agencies (e.g. Children's Services), although, obviously, if a child is at serious risk, this may take place. Very often however, a concern will be shared that may lead to no 'visible' action for the person who raised the issue – but things may well be put into place 'in the background' to keep the child safe – these are usually confidential.

Out of school hours / out of term time, there are two main options available to you if you have concerns. The first is to make a direct referral to North Yorkshire Children's Services, the second is to either contact SSAFA in the first instance or, failing that, contact station community welfare team. Contact details are at the bottom of this letter. If you do refer a concern directly to the Children's Services' Contact Centre, this will pass through a screening process, and, again, may well be deemed not to reach the threshold for further involvement – this is often the case, but it is always better to phone in a concern and to leave this judgement to the experts than to remain silent and worried about a child. If you have made any such referrals, it is helpful for us to know about them when school resumes after the break too – so please do pass these on to us then as well.

*It goes without saying that if any parent has immediate and urgent concerns about a child being at risk of harm they should contact the police directly by calling 999.*

We recently did some pupil conferencing with our children and talked about how they keep themselves safe. Worryingly, many said that there were no risks for them because they lived 'behind the wire'. It is an unfortunate reality that this simply isn't the case. Obviously, 'prevention is better than cure' – so here's a reminder of a few things you can do to help keep your own (and other) children safe:

- Either prevent altogether, or, if not, monitor all **social media** and digital activity. There are a wide number of 'parenting apps' which can clone children's phone usage, add firewalls, notify parents of suspect activity or manage young people's access to the internet. These tracking apps are also helpful because children have been known to 'piggy back' on unfiltered WiFi that they can access from other people's houses. We strongly recommend looking at these if your child(ren) has a phone / tablet. Always screenshot anything that gives you cause for concern.
- Try to ensure your children are **supervised** when they are 'out and about', ideally by yourself or another adult. If children are allowed out to play alone, set up appropriate safeguards (e.g. emergency contacts, short time limits etc.), and avoid this after dark.
- Teach children about **appropriate boundaries** with *all* adults, not just 'stranger danger'.
- Ensure children are taught about appropriate **road safety** etc. Whilst obviously the camp is quieter than a large inner city, any road is potentially dangerous. There are a multitude of contractors, delivery trucks, and, indeed, residents who could pose a risk to children who are not careful on their bikes / playing out. Please also ensure children wear helmets when biking / scooting etc.

One final point to remind parents of, particularly in our service context, is the legislation on 'Private Fostering'. This states that if a child is left in the care of anyone who is not a close family member for 28 days or more, the Local Authority *must* be notified. A close family member includes: parents / grandparents / siblings / uncles & aunts / step parents (if married or in a civil partnership). A long term partner to whom a parent is not married is not classed as a family member under this legislation, and so the LA must be informed if a child is being left in their care. It is also helpful for the school to know of these arrangements.

As mentioned above, if you have any concerns about a child's welfare, please do share these with us, or with one of the other contacts below. Further information and our Child Protection Policy can be found on our website.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping the children in our school, and community, safe.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,



Rob Campbell

Headteacher, Leeming RAF CP School.

**Contacts:**

Rob Campbell (Headteacher)	<b>01677 422675</b>
North Yorkshire Customer Contact Centre (for Children's Services or Private Fostering)	<b>01609 780780</b>
RAF Leeming SSAFA	<b>01677 457111</b>
RAF Leeming Community Support Team	<b>01677 457871</b>