



MAIDEN ERLEGH

SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr P. Gibson

MSc (Educational Leadership), BA (Economics)

Silverdale Road, Earley,
Reading, RG6 7HS
0118 926 2467
MESoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org
www.maidenerleghschool.co.uk
@MaidenErleghSch

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Social Media

During this term we are doing assemblies with all students on our Anti Bullying Programme. Our focus this year is the role of social media and the part our students have to play in preventing this.

I sat at the weekend and reflected upon the sad death of Olly Stephens and the sentencing of the young people involved in his murder - a life cut short, a devastated family and 3 other lives affected forever. The parents shared a very dignified and moving video via the Thames Valley Police Social Media channels: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI9VS952ufA>. The students involved in this would be in Year 8 or 9 and it is something we are reflecting on with our students in school.

Before the summer Paul Hannaford spoke to many of our students. He shared a story of what happens to people who are present at fights - they may throw a punch, the person next to them could produce a knife (that they never knew they had) and if they stab someone, then they both are charged with murder! <https://www.paulhannaford.com/>. We are trying our best to educate our young people on the criminal responsibilities they have when they are involved in serious incidents. The law also states that the age of criminal responsibility is 10. That is the age a child can be arrested, taken to court and charged with a crime.

At school, the instances of fighting and assaults are thankfully incredibly rare, but they do occasionally happen. I want to ensure that all of the school community are clear on the stance we will take. We will investigate all of the evidence that we have, and we will work closely with the police, as appropriate. The perpetrator of any assault will be sanctioned in accordance with the school behaviour policy, as you would expect. However, any student encouraging the incident to take place either by their presence or their involvement in some way will also be dealt with very severely. This includes the use of social media.

We are asking you to talk to your child about the above issues. We are keen to reinforce that they are part of a team and they all have a role to play in stopping anything bad happening to each other. We know that this is a difficult subject but we are keen to ensure that all of our school community are happy and safe and appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Bendall
Senior Assistant Headteacher