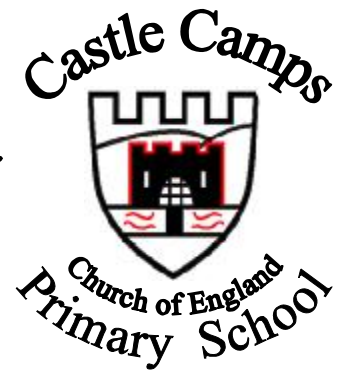


# CYBERBULLYING at Castle Camps



October 2010

A parent came to speak to me the other day because they were concerned that their child was involved in making unkind remarks to another child on a social network site. I was pleased, but disappointed—pleased that they felt confident to speak to me—disappointed that a child at Castle Camps would be using this site: 'FACEBOOK'. In the 'Statement of Rights & Responsibilities' of FACEBOOK it states that no one under the age of 13yrs can be a user. If you allow this to happen, you, the parent, are encouraging dishonesty and breaking the 'rules'. It does not matter what other people do, it is what you do that is important. You are setting the example—passing on the values. You are teaching your child that breaking the rules is OK.

You may consider this too 'strong', but 'Values' are so important. They will make the child you and I see into the adult of the future, who will then make their own decisions based on their values. Values like respect, responsibility, truth and honesty. Being a parent is not easy, but it is a responsibility. In our electronic age it is easy to think that you are 'invisible' when texting, emailing or using a social network site. The lack of 'face to face' contact seems to lessen the responsibility—in fact it should heighten it! Who really knows who is at the 'other end'? It is too late to wish you had done things differently when something has gone wrong. Once you have given your child a mobile phone or access to a computer do you really know what they are doing or who they are talking to? You trust them? Should you be putting them in that position of such responsibility; especially at this age? Have you carefully read the "Statement of Rights and Responsibilities" on FACEBOOK—under 'Terms'? They are difficult to understand and remove most of the rights of the user!

This is something that will become a greater issue in the future. As mobile phones with internet access become less expensive then your child will say, " .. but everyone has one". The reality of controlling their use will be virtually impossible. You will have to rely on their values. Perhaps that situation should wait until they are older. Why does FACEBOOK state 13 yrs of age? Is that too young? In the end it is your decision. I would urge you to consider whether you are acting responsibly. The joy of being a parent is balanced by having to make certain decisions that your child should not be making — you can say no.