



**Burnham on Crouch  
Primary School**  
Connected to our world

16<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following the recent attacks in Manchester and London I thought it would be helpful to update you on what we do to try to keep your children safe and how we react, as a school, to these events.

When I first joined the school, we held a minute silence for those affected in the Brussel bombings and teachers gave information about what had happened. Some parents complained and asked the school to respect parents' rights to choose if and when they share such news with their children. I learnt from this and now we ask teachers to respect that right by not discussing terrorist attacks etc. If children ask, we tell them to talk to their parents about it. When there are national minute silences linked to these events, teachers and children are given the choice to participate individually but no more is said as we now assume that some children do not know. If you would like your child to take part in these national silences please let the office know on the day.

Part of our statutory duty, is to help prevent children from being victims of grooming, extremism and online abuse. Trying to do that sensitively, in a way that takes into account children's ages, is challenging. In the past there has perhaps been an assumption that these things do not happen in Burnham, but those who attended the Online E-Safety evening now realise that much of the threat comes from online. Sadly, very recently, the community has also had to become more vigilant of convicted sex offenders in the local area. By teaching your children to be safe, we prepare them to know what to do if the worst should happen.

At BCPS we focus on teaching character as well as the national curriculum. Children are taught to be kind, truthful, hardworking and resilient. We believe prevention is key so we focus heavily on self-esteem and confidence. This includes teaching how to treat others as we would like to be treated, the importance of respecting others but equally the importance of having conviction in one's own opinions and belief system. A confident, self-assured and happy child is less likely to be vulnerable to online abuse.

In a world beset by difficult questions and contradictory information, it is also a vital skill for children to be able to tease out deeper meaning for themselves, rather than become uncritical consumers of 'fake news' and accept what the media claims to be true. At BCPS we take time in the curriculum for children to think about what they hear and to make decisions based on evidence and argument. Specifically, we use philosophy for children to protect children against indoctrination by religious extremists, in all its forms, whether it be advertising, the media or politicians.

The British Council is clear that 'young people need to be taught how to think to immunise their minds against ideologies that seek to teach them what to think.' We want our children to become articulate and thoughtful learners who have convictions in their beliefs and opinions but are open to listening to others' ideas and willing to accept and respect difference of opinion. By debating questions such as 'What is the difference between telling a lie and keeping a secret?' or 'Should you be polite and helpful to a stranger?' we encourage children to think about how to keep themselves safe.

Finally, governors will be discussing our critical incident plan on the 10<sup>th</sup> July. We have systems in place for a fire but we also need to have a system should someone get into school. Thankfully, with all the new security this is unlikely, however, if someone is intent on getting in we need to be prepared for that. Please know this will be discussed in full with the parent forum on the 19<sup>th</sup> June so please take time to read the minutes so you can pass on your feedback.

As I am sure you can imagine, trying to plan for the unthinkable is very upsetting and at times I wonder what world we live in where we have to tell children as young as 4 what to do if a stranger gets on site. I can only reassure you that we will do this as sensitively as we can to ensure children are not frightened by the drill.

Finally, we are planning to take children on a number of trips to London. This includes a theatre trip to The Globe for most able writers in Year 5, a day trip to Kidzania and tickets to Wimbledon. Given British security services state the current level of threat of terrorism is severe, any visit to London now involves an element of risk. Consequently, I would like to know parents' thoughts on whether or not to go ahead with our plans. If you can let the parent forum know I would be grateful.

As always I thank you for your ongoing support and encourage you to share your views with the school directly so that we can listen and act accordingly.

Kelly Stock  
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