**Hill Top CE Primary School and Nursery**

Dear Parents

We always have to keep up to date with changes in technology and evaluate the risks that new technologies pose to young people. The application ‘Zoom’ has been brought to our attention as it is being used by all kinds of organisations and provides us with opportunities to meet with others that we otherwise wouldn’t be able to do.  There are some specific risks relating to this software that we would like to make you aware of.

**Personal information**

It’s important to discuss with your child that they should not share personal information on Zoom. This includes passwords, their address, phone number, etc. Create your child’s account under a false name or pseudonym and always set a custom background to help hide details in your home. Zoom allows you to turn on virtual backgrounds and select your own image to appear behind you.

**Inappropriate content**

Remind your child that if they do see something that makes them feel uncomfortable or upset then they need to talk about it and report it.

**Privacy Concerns**

Depending on how the app has been set-up, Zoom can offer very little privacy. In many cases, the meeting hosts can see detailed information about each participant including their full name, phone numbers and maybe even location data. Furthermore, depending on where the camera has been set up or where your child’s computer is positioned, private or personal information could be stolen depending on what can be seen in the background.

It is important to remember, people can take screenshots or video anything on zoom including background conversations by adults in the room. In the wrong hands this could cause issues. (The TV programme ‘The Trouble with Maggie Cole’ springs to mind).  Once photos or videos are ‘out there‘ on line, you can’t take them back.

‘Zoom bombing’ is the when unauthorised people join Zoom meetings. Not taking preventative measures or implementing privacy controls could open up the risk of children witnessing inappropriate content with very little notice.

Having said all this, Zoom does provide opportunities to get together at times when you are isolating and I can see how much fun it can be.  Please be aware of and plan for potential pitfalls.

We are also uploading a sheet from National On line Safety which explains more about these and other potential dangers and explains how to set accounts up safely.

Surf Safely

Caroline Balaam

E Safety Co-ordinator.