

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a preventative measure I would like to draw your attention to an online 'Blue Vs Red' social media trend, in which young people organise themselves into rival schools using the colours blue and red with the express purpose of attacking each other. This has come out of South London and has become a national issue.

Sadly, the influence of social media remains negative on the young and this is yet another case. We know that our pupils are not naive enough to get involved in such a trend, but it is still important we share what we know. Another letter accompanies this one from Essex Police.

The government are aware and Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said that the matter "... is deeply concerning" and she understands TikTok chiefs are taking "...action to review and address it." She goes on to say that "Encouraging violence by urging children to take knives to school is illegal. I expect platforms to abide by the letter of the law and where content is illegal, they should take action to stop these abhorrent posts."

We continue to apply our usual school rules and uphold our expectations. Any child found with a weapon, whether toy, makeshift or real, will receive consequences in accordance with our behaviour policy. We have a zero-tolerance approach to this. Please speak to your child about the serious consequences of being in possession of a weapon.

What the school is doing:

- We are working closely with Essex County Council and taking advice from them. Please see the letter from Essex Police.
- Any information reported to us, we are notifying the police as advised.
- After school, we will have additional staff on community walks.
- We are working collaboratively with other local schools to identify any children involved.
- We are encouraging pupils to speak to us if they witness anything concerning, including videos.
- We will inform pupils of what is going on emphasising the importance of not filming or sharing videos linked to the 'blue/red' viral trend.

Headteacher: Sarah Cox, BA (Hons)

Croft Road, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5RN Tel: 01268 794215

Email: [info@theappletonschool.org](mailto:info@theappletonschool.org) Website: [www.theappletonschool.org](http://www.theappletonschool.org)

We would greatly appreciate your support with the following at home: Please remind your child that sharing videos which cause harm or participating in a viral social media trend that incites violence, is morally wrong and is currently causing real harm. I encourage you to check your child's social media accounts, including WhatsApp, to ensure they are keeping themselves safe. Although our curriculum regularly reinforces that the internet is vast and permanent, children understand and apply this message at different stages of development.

Please also remind your child that carrying a weapon is a criminal offence. While there are school sanctions, the consequences beyond school can be far more serious.

I apologise for any alarm this message may cause. However, it is important that we are transparent so that school and home can work together to bring this harmful trend to a halt.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. S. Cox  
Headteacher

Headteacher: Sarah Cox, BA (Hons)

Croft Road, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5RN Tel: 01268 794215

Email: [info@theappletonschool.org](mailto:info@theappletonschool.org) Website: [www.theappletonschool.org](http://www.theappletonschool.org)

