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HEADTEACHER: Mrs. Gemma Martin

Thursday 1st October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

The local safeguarding team have asked us to share the following information with all parents and carers, following some social media activity relating to Worcester city. Although we are not a school in Worcester city that has been directly affected, we do feel it is important to make you aware of this update at this time:

'On Tuesday night, West Mercia Police released the following statement in relation to the heightened concerns in Worcester regarding a number of perceived incidents reported across social media and the press.

It is copied here for you below to read:

Local police commander, Superintendent Steph Brighton said: "I am aware of the heightened concerns in Worcester regarding a number of perceived incidents that have been reported across social media and within the press. I understand that there is a heightened public concern that children may be at risk and I want to reassure you that no information received indicates, in any way, that a gang or individuals are working in Worcester trying to abduct our children.

"We previously wrote to all the local schools to inform parents and carers of the children in our community of our investigations and to inform them of the increased police presence in around the schools for the purpose of reassurance following reports made to us of suspicious activity being directed toward children.

"Protecting children is of course a priority for us and we have investigated every single report that has been made to us. A number of these describe a variety of suspicious vehicles and activities. To date, despite the good intent of the members of the public reporting, none of these suspicious activities have transpired into criminal activity. There are just two unlinked reports that we are investigating in further detail to establish the full facts and details of any activity criminal or otherwise.

"We understand the community's desire for incidents to be resolved and will always work with the public in order to achieve this aim, however, we would like to ask members of the public to refrain from posting on social media groups and pages, but rather report matters directly to the police, as we have observed some misleading and inaccurate information being reported which could potentially jeopardise individual's personal safety and any future investigations.

"One such example of a report with good intent was where a man in a black vehicle was near to a supermarket taking a picture on a phone and an observant member of the public felt this behaviour was suspicious. Officers spoke with the man who explained that he had just purchased the phone and was testing the camera and an associated App out. Naturally, officers checked his device and we able to confirm that nothing untoward had occurred – this incident was then closed.

"At this time, we continue to have additional officers on patrol to reassure members of public and I would encourage you to speak with the officers on patrol near to schools with any concerns you may have.

"For the latest information please visit the West Mercia Police website, our official social media channels, speak directly to officers or get in touch with your Safer Neighbourhood Team."

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/news/west-mercia/news/2020/september/superintendent-steph-brighton/>

We will of course keep you updated of any further information.

Kind regards,
Mrs Martin