Dear Parents and Carers,

My name is Kat Chandler, and I am an IT technician from Fulford School who regularly works at Lord Deramore's school. As part of my role there I work alongside the school staff in computing lessons, rotating through the different classes over the course of the year. This term I have been working in your child's class. After exploring some key ideas about computing using Logo, a simple programming language, we moved on to using an online visual programming environment called Scratch in our weekly computing lessons.

Programming has become an important part of learning about technology to meet expectations in the new curriculum; it also develops children's thinking and problem solving skills and, of course, it is great fun! The children in Year 6 have shown great enthusiasm and have been a real pleasure to work with. Many members of the class are very keen to continue learning with Scratch outside school. I have suggested to them that they could discuss with you registering on the Scratch website and to support this I wanted to send some information home about what it is and how it can be used.

Scratch is completely free to use. It comes from a trusted and respected Education institute, MIT. Using Scratch is a great way to add to the experience of learning to program and also offers the opportunity to learn about e-Safety.

Your child can use Scratch online at home without registering with the site. There is also an offline editor which can be downloaded and installed for use without further access to the internet. However, to enable your child to be able share the programs and games they create they will need to register with the Scratch community. This allows them, their friends and their family to see the projects that they have made. They can also view programs created by other people to see how they have been made and can make changes to adapt these to create a similar game of their own.

The Scratch site lets anyone in the world see what you have created if you choose to share your project. Anyone can leave comments about your work. This is fantastic way for children to get feedback and can be very encouraging. They may get suggestions of ways in which they could improve their game. There are many benefits but also the risk that someone might leave a comment you don't like. The Scratch Team includes a group of moderators who work each day to manage activity on the site and respond to any reports of misuse. When logged in, your child can delete any comments they do not like and can report anyone who is not following the community guidelines. It is extremely rare to see an inappropriate comment but we feel we should let you know that this could occur.

I would suggest you have a look at the website http://scratch.mit.edu to make sure you are aware of how it is used and that you are happy for your child to be part of the Scratch community. If you want to install the offline editor it can be found at https://scratch.mit.edu/scratch2download/

They also have a page for parents which may answer any questions you have http://scratch.mit.edu/parents/

If your child does register as part of the Scratch community, I recommend that you:

- Help your child monitor the comments they receive
- Reinforce the e-Safety messages listed below

Important e-Safety messages for children using Scratch (and other websites):

- Use a **safe alias**
- Keep password and **personal information private**
- Give **positive feedback** to others
- Recognise **copyright** in terms of acknowledging other people's ideas
- **Recognise inappropriate content** - consider whether others would find a project or comment mean, insulting, too violent, or otherwise inappropriate
- Know how and when to **report inappropriate content** and when deleting a comment is the sensible action
- Consider **appropriate length of time to spend online** creating and playing games

The Scratch website has the following guidelines for use which all members agree to when signing up:

- **Be respectful.** When sharing projects or posting comments, remember that people of many different ages and backgrounds will see what you've shared.
- **Be constructive.** When commenting on other's projects, say something you like about it and offer suggestions.
- **Share.** You are free to remix projects, ideas, images, or anything else you find on Scratch – and anyone can use anything that you share. Be sure to give credit when you remix.
- **Keep personal info private.** For safety reasons, don't use real names or post contact info like phone numbers or addresses.
- **Help keep the site friendly.** If you think a project or comment is mean, insulting, too violent, or otherwise inappropriate, click "Report" to let us know about it

Happy Scratch-ing!

Yours sincerely

K Chandler.

Kat Chandler
(Cluster IT Technician, Fulford School)