



Ready, Respectful, Resilient
Headteacher: Mrs T Price BA (Hons) MA Ed

20th November 2023

Dear Parents / Carers

We are writing to advise you of a few concerns that we have regarding our students' use of social media outside of school. There are several groups of students using social media to be persistently unkind, and in some cases racist, about other students over platforms such as Snapchat, TikTok and WhatsApp to name just three. We understand that this has included both sharing inappropriate comments and images. This is leading to a lot of upset and polarisation of some students within school and is not in line with our ethos or values.

Most social media apps are for students **13 years and over** which does not apply to any students in Year 7. If you do allow your child to access social media, then we ask for your vigilance. Just like their interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. What is right will vary from family to family, but some strategies that are known to be successful include:

- Monitoring the apps on your child's phone that are downloaded.
- Enacting parental controls on phones and consoles.
- Reviewing the messages that they send on platforms and apps – making monitoring part of a daily or weekly routine.
- Setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices.
- Encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing.

If a person sends your child abusive, offensive or threatening messages via any social networking site, then they could be committing an offence. The most relevant offences are 'harassment' 'racist communications' and 'malicious communications'. You can report harassment, racism, malicious messaging or distribution of private images without consent online to the police by calling **101**. The police will be able to confirm whether an offence has been committed, based on the full facts and your individual situation. In order to assist with an investigation, you must not respond to the message as it may encourage the sender and make the situation worse. If possible, take a screenshot of the message, so that if it was to be later deleted, then there will still be a record of what was said. We also advise reporting incidents to the social network that was used, as they have processes in place for such situations and may be able to simply remove the content and even close down the person's account.

Many of our students are struggling when problems or conflict arise as a result of what is being shared. We are asking for your partnership in dealing with this, as this is happening outside of school. As a school, we are responding to this with additional teaching during Computing, PSHE, Wellbeing sessions and in 1:1 conversations as they arise. We have also been meeting with

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numerous parents over the last few weeks and would like to thank those who have come into school for their ongoing support. Students cannot access such sites from school and as such these messages are being sent whilst at home and in the care of parents. However, we are fully aware of the repercussions this can have when students are in school.

Please also find below helpful websites on support for various apps.

- www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/parents-and-carers
- www.internetmatters.org/resources/ukcis-social-media-guide-for-parents-

Any instances of bullying, racism or harassment will be treated seriously and may result in suspensions or permanent exclusions. We hope to continue to work together to address these unacceptable behaviours continuing.

Kind regards

Mrs T Price
Headteacher