



Ref:SocialMediaSec/CTY/wlr

1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## **Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

I am writing to make you aware, and ask for your support, in ensuring student use of Social Media does not impact on the education and welfare of others. As a school, we have become increasingly concerned with some students' inappropriate use of social networking sites such as Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Instagram.

Social Media sites are not accessible through the school network and therefore any access that a student has is done outside of school hours. Any access to these platforms during the school day is through the use of mobile phones or devices through students own network, rather than a school network; an action which is contrary to our policy on their use.

Unfortunately the inappropriate use of Social Media is, in some cases, having a detrimental effect on the education and welfare of others and therefore taking too much staff time to investigate incidents. Following this letter should we become aware of inappropriate use of Social Media that may harm the welfare of other students we will not hesitate to take swift action. This may result a lengthy confiscation of mobile phones and other devices and in the most serious cases; handing the device to the police.

**Please be aware that a police investigation can take months and in some cases the device will be destroyed.**

With the above in mind, could we offer these suggestions for minimising inappropriate communion via Social Media;

- Insist, don't ask, on being a 'Friend' on your child's Social Media accounts. Do not tolerate inappropriate use on your child's part and check their usage regularly.
- Please point out that participation in online abuse is a criminal offence. This can be as simple as 'liking' an inappropriate comment from another person. The police are treating this issue with the greatest seriousness and the number of prosecutions has been rising across the country.
- Avoid private access to the internet at home. Keep computers in shared spaces such as living rooms wherever possible. A range of security settings and internet filters will be available either commercially or from your Internet Service Provider (ISP).

We suggest that parents become familiar with their use and apply them at their discretion. We accept that social networking can be a useful communication tool. However, like any form of communication it can be abused and I would like you to help us by considering the points made above and taking any appropriate action.

On a more general level, I must stress that your child's use of the internet and mobile devices away from school is entirely your responsibility and therefore we would urge you to take an active interest in their online activities.

For your information and future reference:

- If you have concerns that your child is being abused online you should save the evidence and contact the police and the platform concerned.
- All UK schools have the power to search their students' phones or mobile devices for evidence where there is grounds to suspect cyber-bullying or any other abuse. The school will not hesitate to use these powers where necessary. If you, or your child feels that these powers constitute an invasion of their privacy, may we respectfully suggest that they do not bring their mobile devices into school.

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- During the school day students should not be contacting parents. In an emergency, students should contact a member staff in order that the school can make contact through the numbers that you have provided us. There is no need for any student to use their phone at all during the school day.

We appreciate how widespread the use of mobile devices is and how much of a part of everyday life they have become. However, our priorities are your children's education and their welfare. If inappropriate use of Social Media threatens to disrupt either of these elements we will treat this very seriously.

I am sure you will appreciate our stance on this issue. If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Progress Leader.

Yours faithfully

Mr I Critchley  
Principal

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