

2nd December 2022

RE: Appropriate Use of Social Media

Dear Parents/Carers,



I am writing to you to clarify the Academy's approach to the misuse of social media. With an increasing number of students having access to technology, issues with the misuse of social media by school age children are rising. To minimise incidents in school we have zero tolerance on the use of mobile phones on the Academy grounds.

If any aspect of IT is misused in the Academy using our equipment, we will investigate and deal with each matter. Fortunately, this type of misuse is incredibly rare, and this is helped by the fact that students are unable to access social media sites on our school network and because of robust monitoring systems which detect misuse and immediately notify our IT Support team.

Most inappropriate use of the internet is done from home or on students' mobile devices during evenings, weekends, and holidays. This makes it very difficult for schools to investigate and take action. The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or the internet in general, must lie with parents/carers. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your child. It is also worth noting the age limits for Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok. Further information regarding these can be found on the NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/>

If your child is the victim of inappropriate use then we strongly recommend that you, as a parent/carer, report the matter to both the social media service and to the police. However, to support you and your child the school will:

- Continue, through our RSE programme and assemblies, to educate students of the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet
- Continue to monitor the use of any form of ICT in normal school hours and the use of the school email system at all times, and will deal with anything deemed inappropriate
- Refer anything that we believe could be defined as, or could potentially lead to, a child protection/safeguarding issue to the appropriate external agencies
- Continue to support parents with advice on how to tackle inappropriate use either by their own child or others

I hope that you find this information useful and by working together, as outlined in this letter, I trust that we can keep all our students safe and well.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C O'Sullivan

Pastoral Director (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Head of School: Mr T. Beecham, BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA

Executive Principal: Mr A. Crofts BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH, NPQEL

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