

10th March 2017

Use of Social Media

Dear Parent/carer,

I am writing to you to clarify our stance on the misuse of social media. We know from our discussions with other head teachers and senior colleagues, in both primary and secondary, that this is a nationwide issue. You have probably seen many cases also reported in the media. Recently, we have been made aware, by both students and parents, of several incidences of the misuse of social media, sometimes by our students and other times where our students have been the victims of misuse.

I wanted to assure you that if any aspect of IT is misused in the school on our equipment, or if there is any misuse of the email system either in or out of normal school hours, then, due to the sophisticated filters in operation, we **will** identify and address this misuse. Fortunately, this type of misuse is incredibly rare and this is helped by the fact that students are not able to access any social media sites on our network. Most of the inappropriate use of the internet is done from home or on students' mobile devices during evenings, weekends and holidays.

Staff at the school have no jurisdiction to deal with this, and cannot investigate it.

It should be noted that in many cases a child may put themselves at considerable risk due to the misuse of social media accidentally. E.g. giving personal details, publishing photographs, etc. to a 'friend' who then distributes this information more widely. They need to be fully aware of this risk.

The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or indeed the internet in general, must lie with parents/guardians. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your children.

Included is a link to a website containing further advice around children's use of IT here: -

www.parentinfo.org

If your child is the victim of inappropriate use then we strongly recommend that you, as a parent/guardian, report the matter to both the website developer and to the police. As stated earlier, unless an issue manifests itself during the normal school day, our staff are not able to address this.

However, to support you and your child the school will:

- Continue, through PSHE and assemblies, to educate students of the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet
- Continue to monitor the use of any form of IT 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 issue to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within school.
- 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 article useful and by working together, trust that we can keep all our students safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Ms A Moore

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Assistant Head Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare