



EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER

Mr K Ford

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Mr G Pendlebury

17th June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Y7: Issues with social media use

As a Year 7 team, we have seen a rise in behaviour incidents and safeguarding concerns because of students misusing their phones or social media.

Problems have often arisen where:

- Students are messaging on large group chats, including TikTok live chats.
- Other Year 7 students in GMS (or from other schools) are added or joined to a group chat (lack of privacy/security).
- Students post inappropriate comments, images and content which can be of an offensive, sexist, homophobic or racist nature.
- Students have shared their passwords and login details to their social media platforms with their peers and allowed other students to use their mobile device to access social media (students accessing and posting on each other's accounts)

Most social media platforms including Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp have a minimum user age of 13; this is stated in the terms and conditions when creating an account. If you are allowing your child to use these sites, it is recommended that their usage is monitored, including the posts they share and like alongside messages that they send on these platforms.

To support you in having an open dialogue with your child about safe internet and social media use, please refer to the following support links to help answer questions you may have to keep your children safe:

- <https://www.webwise.ie/> (Having the chat: <https://www.webwise.ie/category/talking-points/>)
- <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/app/uploads/2021/10/digital-parenting-8.pdf>
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Suggested conversation topics that you may find helpful when initiating this conversation with your child include:

- How many friends they have online that they share personal information with, especially those they have never met in person
- As a society, we value tolerance. This should be reflected in their online conversations. Recent examples of misuse we have seen include the use of racist, homophobic and highly sexualised language.
- The importance of not sharing their personal information online or passwords to social media accounts with others

- What they should do if they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable

We do, of course, work with our students to highlight many of the above issues and more. Our Year 7 cohort have been educated on responsible, respectful internet and social media use in their RSHE lessons and through conversations with their tutors.

We take all instances of bullying, cyberbullying and potentially harmful misuse of social media and online devices very seriously as a school.

I would like to thank parents of Year 7 in advance for having conversations with your child this evening about the technology that they use. Your continued support is invaluable to us.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Antoniamiles".

Miss A Miles
Director of Learning Year 7