



Church of England School
Headteacher: Mr A J Wilcock MA (Cantab)

26th April 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

Social Media Awareness and Use

We recognise the importance of online communication in the lives of young people today. Unfortunately there have been a number of incidents that have occurred on Social Media in recent weeks. These incidents have involved the creation of social media accounts with the sole purpose of abusing, intimidating and threatening students within the Year Group, some of which has continued at school.

Children and young people can also put themselves, and others, at risk when they:

- Upload inappropriate, offensive or even illegal content to their own online spaces
- Post material that could damage their reputation or the reputation of others
- Post inappropriate comments on other people's profiles that is humiliating or results in bullying
- Accept friend requests or engage in chat with people who they do not know.

Year 7 Students will be taking part in a Social Media lesson in this week's Learning for Life and will have an assembly on social media usage to further raise awareness. Online safety is also taught in a variety of forms as part of our curriculum. We have put together some advice for parents and carers so that we can work together to keep our children safe and this is given below.

Advice for parents regarding monitoring social media usage

1. Communicate with your children about their online behaviour. Ask them what they are doing and which sites they are using. Facebook, for example, sets an age restriction of 13 years of age for users of its site. However, there is no verification and younger children often ignore the terms and conditions of use, unaware of the risks this might pose. Something to remember is that if your child is using false information to obtain an account on a social media site, other people can do so as well. Make sure that children know how to use the privacy tools provided and that they are aware of the importance of keeping their profiles private.
2. Support your child in ensuring that they only add contacts that they also know and trust off-line. Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online is dangerous. One way to keep an eye on how your child uses a social networking site is to connect with them.
3. Underline the importance of not publishing or forwarding images and videos which jeopardise their safety or integrity. Nothing which is published on-line can ever be deleted; everything should be assumed to be permanent. Recent studies have indicated that 1 in 4 UK employers visit social media sites to research candidates. They should also ensure that they have permission from others before posting images of them online. It is a criminal offence to circulate inappropriate images of children.



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4. Emphasise the importance of thinking before they post something online. Remind them that messages can be misunderstood online. If they are not sure and would not be happy for their parents and teachers to see it, it is best not to post it. In the south of England two school girls were recently charged as comments they had made online were felt to have contributed to the suicide of another girl.
5. Limit the time your children spend online and do not let them take their devices to bed with them as recent research has shown this to have a detrimental effect on sleep and performance at school. Insist upon device free time during the day; for example at meal times and when your child is doing their homework.

Remember that as a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that your child is using their online devices appropriately and safely. We, as a school, also consider this to be an essential part of our role. However our influence is limited as all online activity happens outside of school hours. Consequently the school is unable to regulate/investigate online incidents. If you feel an offence has been committed you are within your rights to contact the Police.

For further information and guidance on relating to numerous social media platforms please visit the following website, <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/How-to-guides>

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Drury', written in a cursive style.

Mr E Drury
Year 7 Director