

## To Parents/Carers of Pupils in Year 8

18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Social Media

Unfortunately, I have had to deal with some unpleasant issues today in relation to social media. In today's world, social media has become part of everyday life, with children enticed to join various platforms. As many pupils have personal mobile phones, we know that they feel the pressure to join these social media platforms and chat apps, but ask that they only do so when age appropriate.

There are serious implications of unmoderated social media use, including its link to unhealthy habits, unhealthy relationships, low self-esteem and lack of resilience. The risks of using social media include oversharing of personal information, sharing location settings with others, talking to unknown individuals, sending or receiving inappropriate content, developing an unrealistic sense of body image, or becoming addicted to likes and comments. Unfortunately, this also opens up the risk of cyber-bullying and predatory behaviour from others.

Whilst your child may not believe it is the case, there are age restrictions for these platforms, and they are there for a very good reason.

Here are some social media platforms and chat apps and their age restrictions:

Facebook	13+
Instagram	13+
Kik	13+
Snapchat	13+
Tiktok	13+
Twitter	13+
Viber	13+
Wink	13+
Telegram	16+
WhatsApp	16+

We believe that pupils should not be using social media platforms and chat apps until age appropriate, to ensure they are mature enough to use them and know how to seek help when things are not right. **Where they use these apps, we ask that you regulate and moderate their use. This includes explicitly reading the messages or pictures they are sending and how they are using these platforms. This is not about taking away a child's privacy, but rather teaching children how to communicate appropriately. Please have conversations with your child on how to use these apps appropriately and remind them that if they wouldn't want an adult to read/see what they have sent, then it probably isn't appropriate and shouldn't be sent.**

We support and guide pupils on how to use social media in mentor time, assemblies and PSHE lessons, and will cover how to stay safe in the digital domain. We ask for your support by talking to your child and being proactive in checking mobile phones/accounts on a regular basis.

You can use apps such as 'Qustodio', 'Net Nanny' and 'Norton Family Premier Parental Control' to regulate internet use and social media posts. We would also suggest that you check the privacy and security settings in the various apps/platforms, to ensure your child is not inadvertently sharing their location or sharing personal information.

For further information, please see the [Government's guidance](#) or the NSPCC's ['Keeping Children Safe Online'](#) webpage.

Thank you to all parents who are proactive and monitor their child's mobile. We are grateful and appreciate your efforts to support the school's ethos on social media use.

Yours sincerely,

**Máiréad Gibbons**  
**Teacher of English and Year Leader for Year 8**