



March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

The online world is an essential part of our daily lives, and learning how to use technology safely is an essential skill for young people. Websites and apps such as Snapchat and TikTok, for example, are extremely popular but pose risks and it is important that schools, parents, and carers work together to take an active role in teaching children about online dangers. Learning how to act safely when using the internet is an incredibly important part of safeguarding our students and your role as a parent or carer can make a significant difference.

Last week our students had an assembly about how you can't always trust what you see on social media and that we have to understand that some people may not be who they say they are. We stressed the enormous benefits of social media and that most people do not want to harm others, but we also made our students aware that some people may use their online information to cause them or their families harm.

According to a recent Ofcom report, 58% of children under the age of 11 have a social media account setup for them by their parents. The top five most popular being: YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook (Meta). All these platforms require users to be at least 13 years of age. Having an age limit is stating that there is content on these platforms that are inappropriate for students below the age of 13. Therefore, Year 7s should not have these accounts, and only some of our Year 8s.

As we continue to educate our students about the importance of being safe online, we would encourage you to speak to your child about the correct use of social media and help us ensure they are making the right choices while online. We hope the following information is helpful.

### **Parental controls**

Please take a moment to read through how to create parental controls: this guidance is from the [apple support website](#) and this one is from the [NSPCC](#).

## **Top tips and useful links**

Whenever I speak to parents about this issue, I hear their top tips and I am sharing them with you here as you might find them useful:

1. Know your child's password and make sure they know that you will check their phone at any time to ensure they are using their phone appropriately
2. Ensure your child has set [Privacy Setting](#) (this will help your child manage the content they share online and who they connect with)
3. Have conversations with them about safety online: always remind them never to accept a request from someone they do not know; never share personal information or inappropriate images online. Some parents may find starting these conversations difficult and you might find this guide useful: "[The Things I Wish My Parents Had Known](#)".
4. If your child has [shared nude photos online](#) the link is useful to help them and you understand what to do next
5. Always ask your child to leave their phone outside of their bedroom at night. If they are using their phone as an alarm clock, please buy them an alarm clock so their phone can be on charge outside of their room.
6. Have conversations regularly with your child about safety online.

Many schools ban students from using mobile phones; however, at Langtree we have always taken the approach that mobile phones are a reality of life and we would rather guide our young people to use them appropriately.

## **A reminder about our school rules**

We allow students to use their phones outside of the building i.e they can use their phone on the playing fields, outside on our picnic tables. When students are in the building, they should not use their phones as they should be getting into the right mindset for learning. We hope the rule is simple and easy to remember: inside the building no phones. Outside the school building, they can use their phone.

If students are ever withdrawn from lessons and social times, we ask them to hand over their phone and we can store them in a safe place.

## **What happens if my child gets this wrong?**

If a student uses their phone in the school building, we will confiscate it for the day. If this continues to happen, we may contact you and rescind your child's right to have a phone in school

If a student is cyber bullying outside of school and we are made aware of the problem, we will contact all parents involved. We will expect parents to put appropriate sanctions in place and we may rescind their right to have their phone in school for a period of time. They can hand their phone into reception and collect it at the end of the day if you still want them to have a phone walking to and from school.

### **What does the law say?**

It is important that you are aware of the law. The following [guide](#) is for parents of children who have got in trouble online. It details information about the following:

- My child has accessed adult pornography
- My child has sent or received sexual images
- My child has been arrested for viewing indecent images of children

Sometimes students get things wrong: no one is perfect. We always endeavour to educate our students to ensure that they are empowered to keep themselves safe and are resilient to manage modern life.

This letter will be saved on our Well Being Provision Map that is featured in our weekly bulletin.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ms Burman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'B'.

Ms Burman