



February 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

Social Media use outside of school

We are writing to advise you of our increasing concerns that we have regarding some of our students' use of social media outside of school during evenings and weekends.

Whereas many students are using their social media accounts sensibly, there are a minority who are posting unkind comments, and using offensive language that is not in line with our core values of Courtesy, Respect and Integrity.

Social media apps are for pupils 13 years and over. If you do allow your child to access social media, we ask for your vigilance in monitoring and regulating these apps. Just like interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. You may find the following strategies helpful:

- Monitor their phones for the apps that are downloaded
- Be aware that there are decoy apps. Decoy Apps look and often provide the same function as the App they represent. On a decoy calculator, the calculator will work but will also provide an additional function - access to a hidden compartment controlled by a passcode.
- Enact parental controls on phones and consoles
- Review the messages they send on platforms and apps - making monitoring a part of a daily or weekly routine
- Set expectations about what space and times they have access to devices
- Keep phones out of bedrooms in order to encourage healthy sleep patterns
- Use alarm clocks rather than phones to enable students to have a device free bedroom
- Encourage them to share or discuss with you what has been talked about recently on social media and what did they add to the conversation
- Insist that they share their passwords with you

In our most recent well being survey to students, we asked students whether they keep their phone in their bedrooms when they sleep. 16.8% said sometimes. 36.6% said No. 44.8% said Yes. The remaining percentage did not have a mobile phone. You may find this interesting to know that not all students take their phones into their bedrooms. For some young people, the temptation to communicate on their phone with friends or look at the internet is high- so removing that temptation is a good way to help your child's sleep patterns.

We are also concerned that some group chats have 60 plus people in them. We would not recommend a child being in large group chats because of the continuous distraction and challenges to monitor these effectively. We would strongly encourage parents to delete those chat groups from their child's phone.

Whilst we appreciate the benefits of mobile phones and social media/ messaging platforms, using them in the wrong way causes an inordinate amount of stress for some young people. In addition, the pastoral team has been spending an enormous amount of time dealing with issues that are occurring on social media outside of school. We are asking for your partnership in dealing with these matters.

If we are made aware of offensive content, we will contact parents directly if their child is using social media in a way that is not respectful or courteous to other users. We will speak to their child to educate them. In certain situations, we will also sanction students. However, we would really appreciate you monitoring your child's media accounts. If your child is aware that you will be monitoring this, they may be less likely to make offensive comments.

If you see anything inappropriate, you can report it to us for further advice and then remove your child from that particular group/app. For more serious matters (threats to safety, nude images, racial/sexual harassment) we would advise you to contact the police. We do understand that young people make mistakes and we want to avoid criminalising young people. However, they do need to know that their actions on social media can have serious consequences.

For further advice, please see the [NSPCC website](#) on parental controls. Another useful site is [Internet Matters](#).

Thank you for your support in this matter.

S Burman
Deputy Headteacher