



12 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

Re: Social Media use by students

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support with our return to school. It has been a period of adjustment for staff and students alike and your patience and understanding has allowed us to continue to keep everyone safe whilst ensuring our students receive the best quality education.

I am writing to ask for your continued cooperation with social media and its usage outside of school.

Since we welcomed back our students, there have been a number of issues and incidents that have arisen in school due to students conduct when using social media platforms outside of school. I am asking that you continue to work with us and closely monitor your child's use of all forms of social media and address any inappropriate use.

Our school values support equality and diversity and we do not expect any student to be threatened or marginalised on social media, nor do the platforms themselves, as they deem such conduct as inappropriate and against their terms of use. 'Is it **true**, is it **kind** or is it **necessary**; would I be happy to receive this message?' are good prompts for students to consider before posting. We need to support each other more than ever in the current climate.

In a similar vein we are concerned about the type of content, especially through TikTok, that children are being exposed to. We highlighted the issue of live streaming to parents a number of weeks ago and asked you to monitor your child's TikTok access. Our concerns are mirrored as a recent study completed by Europol has also identified that during lockdown, the area of cybercrime is one of the crime areas most affected by COVID-19. This includes online child sexual abuse. As both children and offenders have been forced to stay home and spend more time on the internet, the threat stemming from online child sexual abuse has increased. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to closely monitor your child's use of social media and ensure that they are not at high risk of becoming a victim of this type of crime.

I will be working with students and tutors to ensure that students understand the implications of the misuse of social media and how they can keep safe online. However, only by working together can we address these issues.

There are a number of organisations and charities that can support guiding young people through social media usage, I have included two below.



Young Minds

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-social-media-and-the-internet/>

Internet Matters

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/ukcis-social-media-guide-for-parents-and-carers/>

Thank you in advance for your support with this matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Preston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Miss L Preston
The Raising Standards Team