

Thursday 5th February 2026

Subject: Supporting Children's Safe Use of Social Media

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your family are well. We are writing to share information around social media use, as children across the country are increasingly active on platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp and similar apps, often on phones, tablets, laptops and other devices at home.

Schools nationally are experiencing more issues that start online, outside school hours, and then affect friendships, learning and wellbeing in school. Recent government findings show that 60% of secondary schools have experienced online or cyber-related incidents in the last 12 months, illustrating how widespread these concerns have become.

We would also like to remind families that sharing images or videos of other children or staff without their consent can lead to safeguarding risks and, in some situations, may breach UK law. In more serious cases involving indecent images, the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the Criminal Justice Act 1988 apply.

Families may wish to be aware that most major social media platforms require users to be at least 13 years old, including TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Just Talk and WhatsApp. The Government is also reviewing whether to raise the minimum age to 16 to strengthen protections for young people online.

As many online accounts can be anonymous, there are limits to what can be done by the school. We strongly recommend that families also report any concerning accounts or content you may come across on the relevant platform.

Online safety is taught consistently across the school through both the ICT and PSHE curricula. In KS3 ICT, students begin with a dedicated E-Safety and Digital Literacy unit covering cyberbullying, social networking risks, oversharing, and digital footprints, with these themes reinforced through wider work on data handling, programming and digital tools. At KS4, online-safety knowledge deepens through explicit study of cyber-security threats, prevention measures, digital communication, ethical IT use and legislation related to online behaviour.

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This digital learning is strengthened by the PSHE programme, which develops pupils' digital resilience, online wellbeing and critical media literacy. Across Years 7–11, students explore topics such as online relationships, fake news, social media influence, digital addiction, online financial harms, manipulation, consent, and managing digital pressures. Together, ICT and PSHE provide a spiral, whole-school approach that equips students to stay safe online, think critically about digital content, protect their wellbeing and behave responsibly in an evolving digital world.

To help children stay safe online, we would recommend parents and carers to:

- Check children's devices regularly and talk to them about how they use them.
- Review privacy settings and ensure accounts are set to private wherever possible.
- Be aware of which apps are installed and the minimum age requirements.
- Encourage children never to share images or videos of others without permission.
- Remind them that anything posted online can be forwarded, saved or reshared.
- Monitor use across all devices, including tablets, laptops and gaming platforms.
- Keep open, calm conversations about what they see and share online.

This is part of our ongoing commitment to working together to promote positive, safe online behaviour for all our students.

If parents or carers have any further comments or queries, please contact your child's head of year.

Kind regards,

MSG Pastoral Team

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