

22 October 2024

Dear Parent / Carer

Social Media Use

It has come to our attention over the last few weeks that children in Year 7 have been creating or added to 'What's App' groups in which a large number of children are involved. These groups consist of around 200 members, many of whom do not attend our school – the groups are thought to be generating 500 plus messages hourly. This volume of messaging may mean students are feeling harassed and could also mean that information could be shared with anyone who is in the group with the result that privacy is lost. Screenshots of messages or photo images could be passed on to other children or in some cases to strangers.

Children can stop people they are not familiar with from adding them into groups by going to their privacy settings on WhatsApp, going to 'groups' and selecting 'my contacts'. This ensures that children are only added to groups with people who are already in their contact list.

We understand it is increasingly difficult for parent/carers to keep up with young people's use of new and changing technologies. Evidence suggests that a significant number of incidents of social media misuse happens at home, after school hours where children may have more access online. We strongly advise a device free bedroom policy after bedtime to allow for uninterrupted sleep and rest.

We cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours - is a parent/carer responsibility. We will however take appropriate action if a problem comes to our attention involving the safety or wellbeing of one of our pupils including the use of inappropriate images and messages. In such cases we will report incidents to the police.

In PDC lessons, assemblies and tutor times we provide students with the awareness and knowledge they need to avoid and recognise dangerous situations. It is only through collaborative support between parents and teachers that we will succeed in responsible and safe social media use.

Below is a link to the CEOP's website with advice and tips regarding the safe use of social media groups chats.
https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/11_18/lets-talk-about/socialising-online/group-chats/

Thank you for your continued support

Yours faithfully,

Miss K Longhurst and Mr K Lusk

Pastoral Support Officer Year 7 / Head of Year 7