



## Kirkburton Middle School

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### Enjoying, Achieving, Succeeding Together

20 December 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

#### Social Media use outside of school

As Christmas approaches and the possibility of new devices becomes a reality for some, we thought we would write to advise and remind you of a few concerns that we continue to have regarding children's use of social media outside of school during evenings and weekends.

Social media platforms such as Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have had widespread impact on the way in which we communicate and express our thoughts and opinions and clearly has benefits for us all as individuals and communities however, there is a downside to the platform of social media when misused.

Unfortunately, we are seeing more and more incidents in school where social media has been a vehicle for inappropriate behaviour by pupils. There are occasions when things said or done via social media platforms are at best unhelpful and at worst may constitute harassment or intimidation which could ultimately result in police intervention.

Pupils are not allowed access to phones during the school day and any pupil who breaches these rules will face serious consequences in line with school behaviour and in some cases safeguarding policy. The majority of online issues coming to our attention occur during the evenings and weekends and this has a huge impact on pupil relationships once back in 'the real world' and in the school environment.

Most social media apps are for pupils 13 years and over for a very good reason. If you do allow your child to access social media, we would like to remind you of your responsibility to oversee their online activities as, just like their interactions in person, online interactions often require supervision and support. In particular we are seeing more and more whole class or large What's app groups where the language and content of the chat is often highly inappropriate or at best unhelpful. We strongly advise that you ensure that your child is not part of any such groups.

What is right will vary from family to family but some strategies that are known to be successful include:

- Monitoring your child's phone for the apps that are downloaded and making regular checks on content – **you pay the bill!**
- Enacting parental controls on phones and consoles
- Reviewing the messages they send on platforms and apps – making monitoring part of a daily or weekly routine
- Removing devices from bedrooms at night time when children need to be sleeping
- Setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices
- Encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing

Should you need further support outside of school, you may find these sights useful:

NSPCC [Social media | NSPCC](#)

Think u know [A parent's guide to being social online this December \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)

Young minds [Social Media & Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#)

As a school we will always support pupils who have been impacted by negative social media experiences however the support and intervention from parents and carers outside of school hours is essential and we thank you for your vigilance and support moving forwards.

Yours sincerely,

Mr C Taylor



Executive Headteacher

Mrs S Kerr



Head of School

