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Head of School: Mr. S. Seneque NPQH

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 7 pupils

## Use of Social Media

Please be aware that the legal minimum age for a child to have a WhatsApp account is 13 years.

In recent days it has come to light that some Year 7 pupils have accounts and are creating WhatsApp group chats. The group chats are being used inappropriately; to target, harass and bully other pupils. In addition, photographs of members of staff have been published in the group chats, this is not appropriate.

Should the accounts be used to harass or bully individuals they will be reported to the police, in addition to being disciplined within school policy.

Pupils are regularly reminded of the permanent presence of their digital footprint and the impact this can have on future college and university places as well as with future employers. Actively participating in online harassment or even liking or commenting on such posts can have negative consequences for pupils' futures.

We will continue to teach pupils about their digital responsibility in IT lessons and in PSHE.

Parental support can help by: -

- Talking to your children about responsible use of social media
- Following the age restrictions for each site e.g. nobody under 13yrs should have a WhatsApp, Snapchat or Tik-Tok account
- Regularly check your child's phone or set up family pairing
- Recognise if you pay the bill / have the contract in your name – you are responsible for the content created or posted from that device
- Report any worrying content to the individual social media company

As parents/carers, your guidance and supervision play a crucial role in helping children develop safe online habits. I urge you to have open and honest conversations with your children about the importance of privacy settings, the risks of sharing personal information online, and the significance of treating others with respect in the digital space. Furthermore, monitoring your child's device usage and setting boundaries around screen time can help create a safe online environment for them to enjoy responsibly.



Three Counties Academy Trust



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At school, we are committed to educating our pupils about online safety through workshops, presentations, and discussions. However, we also rely on your support in reinforcing these lessons at home.

You can also email any concerns about online content with school at [onlinesafety@tcat.school](mailto:onlinesafety@tcat.school)

Further information is available at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

Your continued support for QEHS is much appreciated.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mahe".

Matt Lake  
Deputy Headteacher