

Queen Elizabeth High School



Ref: SS/LB

24th June 2022

Dear Parents & Carers

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Our pupils are part of the digital age. The internet is the most wonderful resource we have ever had. At the click of button, we can find out about anything we want. It also is a point of vulnerability for children if they don't use it safely. We cannot prevent our children living in this modern, technological-driven world, therefore we need to teach our children how to safely navigate their way through it.

One of the issues pupils have to come to terms with is the use of social media. Currently, the school is finding TikTok and the pupils inappropriate use of it a cause for concern. Social media can be a wonderful addition to our lives but if used inappropriately it can be harmful to your children's well-being or actually place them in dangerous situations.

We are aware of TikTok videos and posts being created using images of staff, pupils or referencing school staff or pupils in an inappropriate manner. Some of the references are wholly unacceptable and upsetting for our staff and its pupils. We are working hard to identify all of the pupils involved in the creation of these videos and posts. This activity is illegal and could result in prosecutions as malicious communication.

It is worth remembering that following an illegal account or sharing offensive videos or posts (whether your child created them or not) is a serious issue. Ignoring the fact that this behaviour is illegal, these videos are neither kind nor compassionate and do not tie into the ethos we promote.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the main social media sites should not be used by under 13s.

We are asking for your help as responsible parents to consider the following:

- Ensuring your child (if under 13) does not have access to social media accounts where the age range from the provider does not permit it
- Speaking to your child, whatever their age, about the contents of this letter and the risks they are placing themselves in if they continue to follow, share or create these videos or posts
- Sitting with your child and looking at their phone with them (the accounts they follow, the content they download, and the nature of any messages they are sending to other people). I understand that we all want to trust our children and allow them some privacy and you may feel uncomfortable doing this, but it will enable you to reinforce the need for online safety and prevent any issues of bullying or illegal activity escalating.

Please watch the BBC Panorama programme 'Is TikTok Safe?' which sets out the very real dangers of children using TikTok. The programme is only 29 minutes long & is available to watch on BBC iPlayer (link below).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000p3p9>

Childnet & Net Aware have both produced an excellent guide for parents/carers, they cover how to ensure TikTok accounts are set up as safely as possible:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/tiktok-an-updated-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/tiktok/>

Our first concern is the safety of our pupils and what they access, but I am also concerned about the hard working and dedicated staff of QE. Staff, like children, have the right to attend a workplace that is calm and safe where they are respected as individuals.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Seneque
Head of School