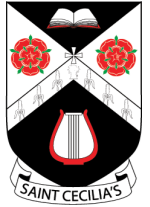# St Cecilia's
## R.C. HIGH SCHOOL

### *Discover • Develop • Rejoice*

Dear Parents and Carers,

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at St Cecilia's RC High School. Children can accidentally or deliberately be exposed to unwanted or unpleasant **content** or comments online. Due to the increase in inappropriate use of social media sites, I would like to draw attention to this rising concern.

Furthermore, since being appointed the Designated Safeguard Lead, I would also like to share some of the platforms that students commonly use and experience issues and concerns online.

**WhatsApp** – an instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be age 16 or older. We would advise that pupils avoid large group chats. Do pupils know and trust the children in the online groups they participate in?

**TikTok** – a social media app that lets you watch, create and share videos. TikTok is public by default. TikTok requires that users be at least 13 years old to use the app and that anyone under the age of 18 must have approval of a parent or guardian. Please see the website link below for information regarding Tik Tok.

https://www.parents.com/kids/safety/internet/is-tiktok-safe-for-kids/

**Facebook** - Facebook is an online social media platform that has over 2 billion users across the globe. Anyone over the age of 13 is able to join the platform. Despite requiring users to be over 13, there are no age verification measures and children can easily create an account. It's therefore important that parents familiarise themselves with the main features of the platform to ensure their young ones remain safe if and when they use it.

**Facebook Messenger** - Facebook Messenger is a communication and chat application which is part of the wider Facebook platform as well as a standalone app. It allows both one-to-one conversations and group chats, has a 'stories' feature and provides the ability to set up a video call session with up to 50 people at a time through its latest update, Messenger Rooms. It has the potential risks of cyberbullying and secret conversations. Children are often creating 'groups' to which others are joining. This means that all information is shared with anyone who is in the group, so privacy is lost.

**Snapchat -** snapchat is another very popular platform that allows users to send time-limited photos that might be embarrassing or silly. It's designed to be low-pressure and low-stakes and give students a sense of freedom. Unfortunately, the time-limited element of the platform can result in anyone, but especially children sending more

questionable pictures than they normally might. Unfortunately, there are ways to capture and recover images sent via Snapchat, which is why no one should develop a false sense of security about them. Snapchat doesn't save pictures and messages sent so you can't see them later. Therefore, it is very hard for parents to monitor their teenager's activity. Even if you have a monitoring tool that allows you to see the content of your child's phone remotely, you won't be able to see what was sent and then automatically deleted. Additionally, while the photo message disappears after a few seconds, the receiver can take a screenshot of the photo while it's live. That means it's not really gone.

These occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after school hours, when children have access to web sites that are blocked in school. With this in mind, and in response to concerned parents, we feel it important to point out to parents the risks of unregulated use of such sites. This will allow you to make informed decisions as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not and when and how to monitor their use, particularly at nighttime. We strongly advise a device free bedroom policy after bedtime to allow for pupils to have uninterrupted sleep, vital for rest and recovery.

The below image details the age restrictions for certain social media platforms.

## Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms
What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

**Under 13**
- Roblox
- PopJam
- FaceTime

**13+**
- Twitter
- Facebook and Messenger
- Viber
- WeChat
- Monkey
- Yubo
- Dubsmash
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Pinterest

**16+**
- WhatsApp
- Telegram Messenger
- Tumblr

**17+**
- Line
- Sarahah
- Tellonym

Sourced from NSPCC website October 2019

I have also included a website which contains information and strategies to enable your child to have some privacy and independence online whilst supporting you in how to limit their screen time and monitor their activity to keep them safe.

https://www.familyeducation.com/entertainment-activities/online/15-apps-for-parents-to-monitor-kids-mobile-use

**How does St Cecilia's High School protect pupils from the dangers of being online?**

I am very aware the use of social media occurs outside of school, but any negative repercussions often impact learning time in school. We value your support in this matter, and we will continue to promote and educate online safety through lessons, Keeping Safe assemblies and guest speakers to provide children with an awareness and knowledge so they can respond appropriately to any dangerous, bullying or unlawful cyber behaviour.

**No mobile phones** - students are not allowed to have their mobile phones on whilst in school. This is to protect them. Should they need to contact home, students should speak to a member of the pastoral team who will be able to support them.

**Internet Filtering - Netsweeper** is our web filtering and online protection vehicle. It provides safe, filtered and logged web access for both staff and students for our school's broadband connection. It also provides a monitoring and alerting service that helps safeguard students.

**Digital Monitoring -** We use **Smoothwall Monitor** to monitor and help safeguard our staff and pupils. The link provides you with more information.

**https://youtu.be/wkcBe6TBVUc?si=0AeNXGbVt0RThU6n**

**Proactive real-time monitoring**
Captures user activity as it happens, automatically sending potential risks through to the Monitor portal.

**Online and offline monitoring**
Captures activity that may indicate a risk, even outside of the regular web browser such as in a Word Document, Messaging app, or encrypted "dark web" browser.

**Auto pre-grading**
Our 24/7 in-house team of moderators review captures to minimise false positives and contact you by phone for any urgent risks.

**Alert notifications**
Alerts are sent in real-time by phone, email, and stored within the intuitive portal for you to review.

Your child's happiness and safety are our number one priority and the staff at St Cecilia's are always on guard against the evolving dangers and risks online. You can find out further information and more detailed advice on the specific platforms by accessing our Online Safety section of our school website: https://st-cecilias.co.uk/safeguarding/online-safety

If you have any concerns, please report them to: safeguarding@st-cecilias.lancs.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Hewitt
Assistant Headteacher
**Designated Safeguard Lead**