



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

Headteacher: **Mr A Owens (MA)**

Address : Thompson Cross
Stamford Street
Stalybridge
Cheshire
SK15 1LX
Tel : 0161 338 2193
Sports Hall : 0161 338 9292

E-mail : admin@westhillschool.co.uk
Website : www.westhillschool.co.uk
Twitter : [@westhillschool](https://twitter.com/westhillschool)

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Dear Parent/Carer,

At West Hill School, we have very high standards with regards to the behaviours that we consider acceptable, both in school and out of it. Additionally, we have sanctions in place for any boy that falls below these standards.

You will no doubt be aware of the recent press attention relating to the misuse of social media in schools and the damage this can cause. Professional reputation is something that goes with us through all walks of life. Like most things though, it is fragile and can be deeply affected from only the slightest of accusations. Professionals working with children should be protected in the same way that their pupils are.

In an effort to prepare our boys for adult life we are taking the unusual step of writing to you to highlight this issue and the repercussions that certain types of behaviours can generate, not only during school years, but also in later life. In short, we urge you to take the time to speak with your son about the dangers of misusing social media and both the short and long-term effects such behaviour can have on others and your child's future achievements.

We cannot stress enough that the misuse of social media is taken very seriously. The impact of such content can go far beyond what pupils originally intended; showing how easily online content can get out of control. Any pupil found to be acting in an abusive or inappropriate manner towards another pupil or member of staff, or bringing the school into disrepute through their words or actions will be dealt with in line with our behaviour policy. Dependent upon the nature of their actions they may also be reported to the police.

Whilst talking to your son please emphasise the importance of using social media responsibly and appropriately in order to prevent any such repercussions. Please make him fully aware that all interactions that he makes on social media can be traced and may stay with him for life - possibly affecting future employment opportunities. In the world in which we live in today, many employers use social media as a way to judge the character of potential employees.

We recently sent home an email that highlighted National Online Safety's #WakeUpWednesday campaign. Their weekly post on Twitter offers advice, for both parents/carers and pupils, regarding staying safe whilst using the Internet. We retweet these guides every Wednesday on our school Twitter account: [@westhillschool](https://twitter.com/westhillschool). The information helpfully covers different online platforms and their potential threats, as well as their strengths. The National Online Safety website also offers helpful advice and tips to help to keep your son safe whilst online.

We've highlighted this very important issue to you as we know that you take your son's online safety as seriously as we do. We therefore feel assured that you will take the time to have this conversation with your son.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Owens