

12th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you are aware, access to and use of social media is common these days and has become second nature to many of us. With this in mind, and due to an increasing number of reported issues related to social media use outside of school, we wanted to provide some ongoing advice that is intended to help safeguard your children and yourselves as parents/carers.

Social media is a good example of how online behaviour can present e-safety risks. Users can express themselves with online personalities and chat, and socialise, with peers. They can publish and share multimedia content such as music, photos and video clips. If used inappropriately however, users can put themselves and others at risk.

Most social media sites set age restrictions. **Facebook, for example, sets an age restriction of 13 years of age for users of its site, Instagram age 13, WhatsApp age 16 and TikTok age 13+.** However, there is no verification and younger children often ignore the terms and conditions of use, unaware of the risks this might pose. Something to remember is that if your child is using false information to obtain an account on a social media site; other people can do so as well.

Most social media sites allow users to set their profiles to 'private' for viewing only by approved contacts. By not using these settings, users can put themselves at risk.

Children and young people can also put themselves, and others, at risk when they:

- Upload inappropriate, offensive or even illegal content to their own online spaces;
- Post material that could damage their reputation or the reputation of others;
- Post inappropriate comments on other people's profiles that is humiliating or results in bullying;
- Accept friend requests or engage in chat with people who they do not know.

We feel it is important to point out to parents the risks of underage use of such sites, so **you** can make an *informed* decision as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not at the moment.

Should you decide to allow your child of any age to have a social media profile we strongly advise you to:

- Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting offensive messages or photos

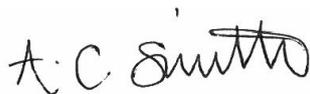
- Have a look at the advice for parents/carers from all social media apps.
- Set up your own profile so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as a friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online
- Make sure your child understands the following basic online-safety rules that we have learnt about at school.

- Always keep your profile as private as possible.
- If possible, do not put in your full name, e.g. *Bart S*, instead of *Bart Simpson*
- Never accept friends you do not know in real life
- Never post anything – writing or images – that could reveal your identity
- Never post anything you would not want your parents to see or that you wouldn't say face to face
- Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult
- Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you

We also recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk

If you have any concerns about your child's use of social networking sites or would like support in knowing how to keep your child safe online please make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or Mr Young (Computing and online safety leader).

Thank you for your continued support,



Amanda Smith
Headteacher



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