

Dear Parent/Guardian

October 2018

I am writing to you to clarify elements of the academy's policy on the misuse of social media. We know from our discussions with other head teachers and senior colleagues, primary and secondary, that this is a nationwide issue. You have probably seen many cases reported too in the media. Recently, we have been made aware, by both students and parents, of several incidences of the misuse of social media, sometimes by our students and other times where our students have been the victims of misuse. **We have also been made aware of students using social media to bring the academy into disrepute and posting inappropriate comments about staff members. This is not acceptable and can lead to further action being taken by the school.**

I wanted to assure you that if any aspect of ICT is misused in the Academy on our equipment, or if there is any misuse of the Academy email system either in or out of normal academy hours, then, due to the sophisticated filters in operation, we **will** identify and address this misuse. Fortunately, this type of misuse is incredibly rare and this is helped by the fact that students are not able to access any social media sites on our network. Students are also not allowed to use mobile phones during the hours of 8:40 and 15:00, I would ask at this time for you to consider whether your child needs to bring their mobile phone into school. If your child has their phone out during the times above it will be confiscated. **If there are continuous breaches, you will be asked to come and collect it from reception.**

It should be noted that in many cases a child may put themselves at considerable risk due to the misuse of social media accidentally, e.g. giving personal details, publishing photographs, etc. to a 'friend' who then distributes this information more widely. They need to be fully aware of this risk.

The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or indeed the internet in general, must lie with parents/guardians. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your children and I have placed a document containing advice intended to support you in this process on our website.

If your child is the victim of inappropriate use then we strongly recommend that you as a parent/guardian report the matter to both the website developer and to the police. As stated earlier, unless an issue manifests itself during the normal academy day, our staff are not able to address this.

However, to support you and your child the Academy will:

- Continue, through ICT lessons, tutor time and assemblies, to educate students of the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet
- Continue to monitor the use of any form of ICT in normal academy hours and the use of the Academy email system at all times, and will deal with anything deemed inappropriate
- Refer anything that we believe could be defined as, or could potentially lead to, a Child Protection issue to the appropriate external agencies
- Continue to support parents with advice on how to tackle inappropriate use either by their own child or others

I hope that you find this document and useful and by working together, as outlined in this letter, I trust that we can keep all our students safe and well.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Gabbi  
Principal

