NAVIGATE ILLUMINATE SHELTER

JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE

NMc/JCr

4 April 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

The use of social media

It has come to our attention that pupils in the school are improperly using social media and instant messaging platforms on their electronic devices. Our concerns regarding this matter relate to issues of online safeguarding and the impact that this is having on learning in school.

While we recognise the internet is an important and enjoyable part of everyday life and learning, but there has to be measures and restrictions in place, particularly in the context of a school.

We have been experiencing instances of some videos being shared across social media apps between pupils that could be emotionally distressing. Additionally, we are also aware of fake accounts being created and 'Guess Who?' videos or games being shared online, also causing distress to some of our students. I am sure you would agree that this is unacceptable. Not only does this distract the pupils involved, but also negatively affects the members of staff concerned.

Online safeguarding

We want to ensure the safe online experience of our pupils and prevent them from being exposed to dangerous areas of the internet.

Net Aware (https://www.net-aware.org.uk/) provides guidance and advice to parents surrounding how to protect their children online, including understanding the risks that specific social media platforms pose.

We must be assertive and proactive in keeping children safe in an increasingly connected world. For this reason, it is vital that all parents are aware of and understand current regulations and guidance. It may be useful to know the following age restrictions for having social media accounts:

- Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok – 13 years old
- WhatsApp – 16 years old

For further details on this, please see https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides

Despite the age restrictions, the vast majority of social media sites do not ask for proof of age; therefore, the responsibility primarily is with parents, and to a degree, teachers, to monitor acceptable use of social media. We are committed to teaching your children about online safety as part of the school's curriculum.

What we ask from you

We have to work together as a community to protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils and uphold school values. We ask you to:

- Be diligent with your children's use of social media.
- Be aware of the age requirements for social media platforms and sites – is it above the age of your child/children? Are these sites and their content appropriate for your child/children to be using?
- Familiarise yourself with the school's policies around online safety.
- Urge children, as we will, to refrain from using electronic devices disrespectfully in regard to the school, including our staff.

Fundamentally, we want our pupils and our school community to be safe. I hope that you agree with our position and the points set out in this letter so that the school can continue to ensure its high standards and great work going forward.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of social media, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the relevant Pastoral Support Officer at school.

Yours sincerely,

MR NEIL McCUDDEN
Assistant Headteacher