

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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1st February 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

Social media use by Primary School children

We have in recent weeks dealt with a number of reports of some of our children using social media and group chats outside of school unsafely or inappropriately. At St Joseph's, we want our pupils to grow into responsible young people who understand how to protect themselves and their own privacy, respect the privacy of others and who can settle differences in a respectful and constructive manner, online and offline. We are, however, spending increasing amounts of time dealing with the fallout from avoidable social media issues which are **occurring outside of school** that are not necessarily within our remit to monitor, investigate or sanction, including:

- Using group chat functions on 'WhatsApp' and sending unkind messages
- Using Social Media Platforms which are not age appropriate without the consent of their parents/carers
- Using social media without activating the privacy settings, making it possible for anyone to see their profile and interact with them
- Making inappropriate/unkind comments or sharing inappropriate memes/ images
- Posting pictures of themselves, revealing clearly where they live (e.g. next to a road sign immediately outside their house) or which school they go to (i.e. in their school uniform).

We therefore 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. It is important to note that none of the most popular social media platforms are age appropriate for any of our children. We also ask that if your child has access to a tablet or has their own mobile phone that you monitor carefully what and how they are accessing social media and group chat functions.

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

18+ or 13 with parent's permission



YouTube



WeChat



Kik



Flickr



Play Store



Spotify

(12 with parental permission)

Parental responsibility:

Should you decide to allow your child to use social media platforms that are not age appropriate, then we strongly advise you to:

- Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted, not the wider cyber community
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe, kind and appropriate online behaviour
- Ask them to install the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) application from www.facebook.com/clickceop on their profile. This places a bookmark on their profile to CEOP
- Remind your child to use the Report Abuse button, available on most social media platforms, which has been known to deter offenders
- Ask your child to block a contact if they are being unkind
- Set up your own profile on the social media platforms you allow your child to use so you understand how the platform works and insist that they have you as a friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online
- Remind them of the 'safe@stjosephs' button on the VLE where any concerns from the VLE can be reported
- Make sure your child understands the following basic E-safety rules that they have learnt about at school:
 - Always keep your profile as private as possible
 - If possible, don't put in your full name, e.g. Bart S, instead of Bart Simpson
 - Never accept friends you don't know in real life
 - Never post anything – writing or images – which could reveal your full name, where you live/go to school
 - Never post anything abusive or offensive
 - Never agree to meet somebody you only know online
 - Always tell your parent/carer if you feel threatened or someone upsets you

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

We appreciate your support in ensuring that all our students are safe and appropriate in their online interactions outside of school, so they can feel safe and happy in school.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Catherine Walker
Headteacher

