Biddenham
International School & Sports College
Principal: Mr David Bailey Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Social Media

I am writing to you to highlight some concerns I have with regards to social media access both through mobile devices and computers. Online safety is an important part of keeping your children safe at school, and we wish to work with you to ensure they have responsible and appropriate online role models and learn to behave safely online when using, posting and sharing on social media sites.

The list below outlines the age restrictions on the most popular social networking sites.

- Facebook: 13 years
- House Party: 13 years
- Instagram: 13 years
- Musical.ly: 13 years with the approval of parent
- Periscope: 13 years
- Pinterest: 13 years
- Sarahah: 17 years
- Snapchat: 13 years
- Skype: 13 years
- Twitch: 13 years
- Twitter: 13 years
- WhatsApp: 16 years
- YouTube: 13 years

As outlined above, many social media sites set the minimum age of those using their platforms at the age of 13. This aligns with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). If your child is under the age of 13 and uses social media on a personal device they will have had to put a fictitious date of birth into the app in order to access an account. Doing this can present a number of risks to your child, and could expose them to harmful or disturbing content.

If you are allowing your child to use these sites it is recommended that their usage is monitored, including posts they share and like, and messages they send on these platforms. We also recommend checking the age restrictions on any apps your child uses if it is not included on the list above.

If your child does have a mobile device in school I would ask that you remind them not to let others use their mobile device at any time. Furthermore, if you know of any social media apps on your child's phone, in particular Snapchat, you should expect them to know the password to access the app. I would also encourage you to check posts, 'likes', 'shares' and messages.

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If your child allows other students to use their mobile device to access social media this could lead to your child being put at risk. These possible risks include but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Being exploited by others
- Engaging in abusive or harmful conversations or topics
- Peer pressure
- Harassment

I would also like to remind you that mobile devices do not have to be brought into school and if students need to contact home, there are facilities to do this throughout the school day.

We take all instances of bullying, cyber-bullying or harassment involving any members of our communities very seriously. We want all members of the Biddenham community to feel safe both on and offline.

If you have further queries or concerns regarding the content of this letter, please do get in touch with the Key Stage 3 Pastoral team.

Yours sincerely,

Miss E Simpson
Assistant Headteacher - Key Stage 3