Our ref: SEA/cc/pd/SocialMediaUpdate

18th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We are committed to keeping everyone up-to-date about new and emerging risks related to the ever-changing world of social media and we need your support to ensure pupils are not using social media inappropriately.

Over the past year, we have seen a large rise in the number of incidents online that parents/carers are reporting to the school. Unfortunately, we are increasingly finding that we are unable to identify who is making the unpleasant comments. It is easy for anyone using the internet to set-up fake accounts and schools are not able to trace the 'IP address' to identify the device these accounts were set up from.

Investigating online incidents, which often cannot be concluded as perpetrators cannot be identified, takes up a huge amount of staff time which could be spent on focusing on learning.

We have already shared with parents/carers age restrictions for social media sites but here is a polite reminder:

Social Media Website	Age Restriction
Facebook	13 years old and over
Snapchat	13 years old and over
Whatsapp	16 years old and over
YouTube	13-year-old to sign up must have their parent/carer permission
Instagram	13 years old and over

Although social media can have many benefits, it can also have an extremely detrimental effect on young people's mental health and wellbeing if it is not used and monitored carefully. **If your child experiences unpleasant comments then please report it to the police**, who have the resources and abilities to trace accounts of incidents that have occurred outside of school. If you are concerned that your child is being exploited online then please ensure you report it immediately by clicking on the CEOPs (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) button on the social media website.

We will always investigate online incidents where possible, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for the reasons outlined above. The most effective way to keep your child safe is to monitor their behaviour online. If you would like support in understanding how to safely monitor your child online we are running a presentation via Microsoft® Teams, which is open to all parents/carers on Wednesday 9th June 2021 at 3.30pm.   Please email postbox@bloxwichacademy.co.uk if you wish to attend.

Yours sincerely

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