RP/NM/da/Social Media

8th October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers
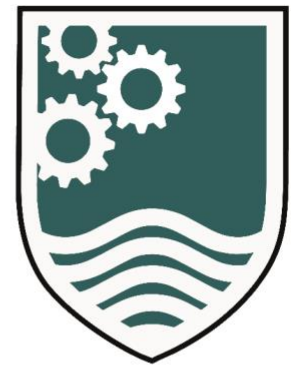
In today's digital age, social media has become a significant part of many pupils' daily lives. While these platforms can offer opportunities for creativity, communication, and connection, they also present a variety of challenges that impact not only our pupils' well-being but also the school environment.

We want to take this opportunity to outline our school's stance on social media use, the potential risks associated with it, and how we handle issues that arise from online behaviour. Whilst we recognise that social media use largely occurs outside of school hours, its impact sometimes finds its way into our classrooms, corridors, and pupils' lives. Incidents that originate on social media, such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content sharing, or online conflicts, can disrupt the learning environment and affect our children emotionally and academically. Bloxwich Academy takes these matters seriously. Even when social media interactions occur outside of school, if they negatively impact the well-being of pupils or the school environment, we will address these issues promptly in collaboration with parents and, if necessary, appropriate authorities.

To ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils, we have established clear guidelines for handling incidents related to social media:

- **Cyberbullying or Harassment:** If a pupil is involved in cyberbullying—whether as the victim, perpetrator, or bystander—we will take swift action in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy. This includes addressing online behaviour that causes harm to another child, even if it happens outside of school hours.

- **Inappropriate Content:** Sharing inappropriate or harmful content, such as explicit images, videos, or offensive language, is strictly against our school's values. Any pupil found participating in such activities will face consequences that may include parental involvement, and, in serious cases, law enforcement.

- **Online Conflicts:** Conflicts that arise on social media platforms but affect pupils' relationships at school will be treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face disputes. We encourage pupils to seek support from trusted adults when conflicts occur, and we work to mediate these issues before they escalate.

Our school is committed to educating pupils about responsible social media use and online behaviour. Through our personal development curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of respect, empathy, and privacy when engaging online. We also emphasise critical thinking skills to help children navigate misinformation, peer pressure, and unhealthy social comparisons often found on social media. We believe that parents and carers play a vital role in guiding their children's social media use.

Here are a few ways you can support us in creating a safe and positive online experience for your child:

- **Monitor Online Activity:** Be aware of the platforms your child is using and have regular conversations about their experiences on social media. Encourage them to come to you if they encounter any issues.

- **Set Boundaries:** Establish limits on screen time and social media use, especially during study hours and bedtime. Teaching your child the importance of balance between online and offline activities is key to their well-being.

- **Discuss Consequences:** Help your child understand the real-world consequences of online behaviour. What is shared online can have a lasting impact, both socially and legally.

- **Encourage Positive Use:** While there are risks, social media can also be a platform for positive self-expression, learning, and connecting with others. Guide your child in using these platforms in a meaningful and constructive way.

We believe that the best approach to managing social media challenges is a strong partnership between parents and the school. If you ever have concerns regarding your child's social media use or believe they may be involved in an issue that affects their safety or emotional well-being, please do not hesitate to contact the school by emailing postbox@bloxwichacademy.co.uk or calling your child's Head of House or the Sixth Form Office.

We are here to work with you to resolve these issues and to ensure that all pupils, parents, and staff feel safe, respected, and supported both at school and online.

Your involvement and understanding of these issues are crucial in helping us foster a positive and respectful community. Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to your child's success, both in school and online.

Yours sincerely

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