



ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC COLLEGE

ORARE LABORARE SERVIRE

Misuse of Social Media – Year 8

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has come to the school's attention that a small number of children in Year 8 have engaged in serious misuse of social media by sharing inappropriate messages and images with other children through large group chats that they are part of.

We must remind you that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and as parents you have an important part to play in monitoring the online activity of your child, particularly when they are using social media platforms such as 'What's App' and 'Snapchat', which permit the formation of large groups chats. While we understand that mobile phones have become a part of everyday life, it is important that students use them responsibly outside of school. Inappropriate use of these devices can have lasting negative consequences on students' emotional well-being as well as bringing them to the attention of the police and children's services. As a school, we strongly discourage children under the age of 16 using these apps – our experience is that they are breeding grounds for bullying and inappropriate behaviour.

At All Saints Catholic College, online safety and safeguarding is a key aspect of our PSHE curriculum and safeguarding procedures. As a school, we are confident children are aware of how to stay safe online, unfortunately, too many children in Year 8 are failing to put their knowledge into practice. As a school, we need to work in partnership to make sure your child is kept safe from this activity.

Children can be cautioned or even prosecuted under law from the age of 10, if they are involved in inappropriate use of the internet or social media which includes sending or receiving inappropriate images, messages or videos. Sending a communication which is grossly offensive and has the purpose of causing distress or anxiety is an offence under section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988. We urge that you exercise your duty of care to ensure you monitor what your child is doing online at all times and that parental controls on devices should be used to full effect.



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We would like to take this opportunity to seek your support in reinforcing the following measures to help prevent misuse of mobile phones:

1. **Monitor Mobile Phone Usage:** Please be vigilant in monitoring your child's phone activities, including their use of social media, group chats, messaging apps, and photo-sharing platforms. Many devices offer parental controls and usage tracking features to help with this.
2. **Discuss Online Responsibility and Etiquette:** Encourage open discussions about the impact of sharing inappropriate content, the importance of respecting others' privacy, and the lasting effects of poor online behaviour.
3. **Set Clear Boundaries and Rules:** Establish boundaries around the use of mobile phones, especially during school hours, and limit unsupervised time on devices. Creating a set of agreed-upon rules at home can help students develop responsible habits.
4. **Encourage Positive Digital Citizenship:** Help your child understand the importance of being a responsible digital citizen - treating others with kindness and respect online, just as they would in person.
5. **Reporting online behaviours:** If your child has been the subject of cyber-bullying, take a picture of the comments being made, remove them from a group and block numbers of anyone involved. You can report and block senders who have posted negative comments on most social media sites. If you believe that threatening messages have been made about your child, you should contact police and supply the evidence taken.

All Saints Catholic College will continue to take proactive steps to address this issue, including providing digital safety lessons and online safety talks by the Metropolitan Police. By working together, we can ensure that your child makes better choices online and develops a more responsible, mature approach to using their mobile devices. Thank you for your ongoing support and we ask that you discuss the content of this letter with your child.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Mc Geoghegan (Designated Safeguarding Lead)