

21 April 2022

Dear parents/carers

Re: Mobile Phone Use

In recent weeks, we have seen a marked increase in social disagreements and unkindness in Year 7 that has stemmed from inappropriate group chats and social media use across many of the platforms listed below. Some of this use has been during school hours, when school policy is that phones should not be brought into school (or, at the very least, must be switched off and left in a pupil's bag).

As a reminder, the legal age at which a pupil can register for an account with these platforms are as follows:

WhatsApp	16
TikTok	13
Instagram	13
Facebook & Messenger	13
Twitter	13
Snapchat	13
YouTube	13

We would appreciate your support in monitoring your child's mobile phone and social media use. Whilst social media can be a force for good and has its advantages, it is worthwhile discussing the potential dangers of inappropriate or ill-informed use of these platforms with your child.

The Child Exploitation Online Protection Command (CEOP) provides extensive advice and guidance for parents, carers and pupils at <http://thinkuknow.co.uk>. Some of their advice surrounding social media use suggests you consider:

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- We strive to fulfil everyone's learning potential. • We value high standards, hard work and a ceaseless desire to improve.
- We provide a safe, kind, nurturing and inclusive environment. • We enjoy the journey together.

- **What are the risks?**

Risks can include inappropriate content or behaviour, over-sharing, making friends with people that they don't know, and 'catfishing' (when people pose as somebody else in order to form a relationship).

- **Is your child ready?**

As well as considering the minimum age requirements for each platform, it is also pertinent to think about whether your child's social skills are ready (as the lack of visual clues such as body language can make social interactions more difficult), how they cope with negative experiences, and whether they will come to you or another trusted adult if they need help.

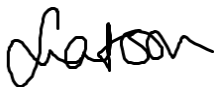
- **Are you ready?**

Talking honestly with your child maintains an open line of communication about social media and reinforces that you are there if they need help or need to report anything. Exploring platforms together can help you both become familiar with security settings and mechanisms to report inappropriate content, how to use the platforms positively and any potential dangers. This can then support you in making an agreement together about what social media use might look like for your child, once you are both ready, and how you will support and monitor this use.

If you have any concerns about your child's social media use, you can visit the CEOP website at <http://thinkuknow.co.uk>. You can also contact myself or the Deputy Head of Year 7, Mrs Jordan, on 0115 7483410 respectively. The school's mobile phone policy remains that phones should not be brought into school or, at the very least, switched off and left in pupils' bags.

We appreciate your support in ensuring Nottingham Girls' Academy remains a safe, kind, nurturing and inclusive environment where all pupils enjoy the journey together.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs S Watson
Head of Year 7

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