



**Where Pupils Achieve and Excel**  
Headteacher: Mrs T Price BA (Hons) MA Ed

17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Re: The challenge of social media and school**

I write to you following concerns of an increase in non-school related issues that are impacting on our students and their education. Social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram have had widespread impact on the way in which we communicate and express our thoughts and opinions. Social media clearly has many benefits for us both as individuals and as communities but also it can have a negative impact too.

Unfortunately, we are also experiencing an increasing number of situations where social media has been the vehicle for inappropriate behaviour by students. We live in a society where we are proud of our right to freedom of speech and would not wish to suggest that this should be curtailed in any way. There are occasions, however, when things said in the virtual world are at best unhelpful and, at worst, may constitute harassment, bullying or intimidation which could ultimately lead to police involvement.

**Social media and pupil bullying**

There have been a growing number of situations where we have had to deal with students using social media to be unkind to others. What starts as something seemingly harmless takes no account of how those on the receiving end might feel nor does it recognise how quickly things can get out of control and become extremely unpleasant. Whilst things are most likely to have taken place off the school site and outside school hours, the resulting 'fallout' in such situations can have major implications for harmonious relationships within school and a resulting negative impact on teaching and learning.

If you have concerns that your child might be on the receiving end of hurtful social media posts, or playing a part themselves, please talk to us. Some recent examples of ill-considered use of social media have caused school staff to spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to manage issues and situations. We would much prefer if this time could be focused on our students' education.

If postings are threatening or discriminatory then the police may become involved and have the authority to seize mobile devices and contact service providers.

**Working Together**

Finally, at James Bateman Middle School we pride ourselves on the relationships we forge with pupils and parents. This is crucial to the academic success of our young people. On occasions we don't always get it right and this may leave you feeling angry or frustrated. If you are unhappy with the way an incident has been dealt with could I respectfully ask that you contact the school to speak to a senior member of staff or myself. If I am not available I will always get back to you within a day or two. I am also more than happy for you to make an appointment to come into school in order to discuss things further. Emails are generally responded to between 8am and 4.30pm.

We have had a couple of cases recently where parents have vented their frustrations publicly on social media and this has then led to lots of people commenting without knowing the full facts and usually in a very derogatory manner towards the school and staff. Staff work incredibly hard to support your child and would

not intentionally wish to cause upset. Usually any complaints can be dealt with swiftly and in a way acceptable to all parties. However, if this is not the case the school also has a complaints policy which is available on the website and which is overseen by governors and trustees of the Creative Learning Partnership.

To help you to support and protect your child when using social media there are some useful apps listed below. They can be used by parents to protect and monitor their child's mobile phone usage.

1. FamiSafe iOS Parental Control
2. Bark Parental Control for iOS
3. Boomerang iPhone Parental Control
4. NetNanny iPad Parental Control
5. Mobicip iPad Monitoring App
6. Kaspersky Safe Kids Parental Control
7. Mobistealth
8. Qustodio iOS Parental Control
9. ScreenTime Parental Control

Should you have any questions or suggestions as to how we can support each further then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Mrs T Price