

Guidance on Managing Use of Social Networking Sites

Many adults find the methods of communication used by young people these days a little confusing. One particular problem is the improper use of social networking sites such as Facebook, which can be accessed via computer or iPod Touch devices. Recent publicity has emphasised the danger teenagers can be placed in, for example if arranging to meet a stranger.

Students are blocked from using such sites on school computers. You may take the view that how they use them at home is not the school's business and is for you, as parents to monitor. However, it does become the school's business, when unpleasant or bullying messages are posted that then have repercussions in school, with upset or aggressive students. Also, we may become aware that a student has put him/herself at risk by posting inappropriate images of him/herself on such a site.

When such incidents spill over into school we will look into the matter and deal with it firmly and fairly. Students finding themselves caught up in such matters should report it to their Form Tutor who can then deal with it as appropriate. At times this may even involve us contacting police or Social Services. To help raise awareness of students of how to protect themselves, we have arranged for PC Simon Rutt, our School's Liaison Police Officer, to come in after Easter to take an assembly with Years 9 and 10.

There are some ways that you as a parent can help prevent such undesirable outcomes:

- Try to monitor activity on Facebook.
- Insist that you are a Facebook 'friend' of your son/daughter.
- Using blocking facilities to try to ensure safe use.
- Report any inappropriate use (e.g. sexual or bullying) via the sites safeguarding facility.

We are also hoping to arrange for an evening presentation in school for parents on the internet and protecting children, from DS Jerry Waite of the Police Child Protection Team. This will take place during the Summer or Autumn Term and further details will follow as soon as plans are finalised.

Please support the school and help to keep your son/daughter safe by being as pro-active as you can in dealing with this.

Mrs L G Skinner
Deputy Headteacher