

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As an academy, we are becoming increasingly concerned about the number of children who are using social media and chat rooms. You will probably have seen many cases reported too in the media.

It should be noted that in many cases a child may put themselves at considerable risk due to the misuse of social media accidentally. E.g. giving personal details, publishing photographs, etc. to a 'friend' who then distributes this information more widely. They need to be fully aware of this risk.

Recently, we have been made aware, by both pupils and parents, of several incidences of the misuse of social media, sometimes by our children and other times where our children have been the victims. However, this inappropriate use of the internet is occurring at home or on students' mobile devices during evenings, weekends and holidays.

We appreciate it is parental choice, but nearly all social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age to access and use their services. This includes Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Musical.ly and Skype. WhatsApp have just announced a change to their terms and conditions for users based in Europe. Users will now need to be 16 to use WhatsApp.

If your child does have a social media account please can you be extra vigilant about checking chatrooms and things that are posted/uploaded. The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or indeed the internet in general, must lie with parents/guardians. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your children.

If your child is the victim of inappropriate media use then we strongly recommend that you as a parent/guardian report the matter to both the website developer and to the police on 101. **This is because, unless an issue manifests itself during the normal academy day, staff at the academy have no jurisdiction to deal with this, and therefore cannot investigate it.**

Kind regards

Ms K Gleave
Head Teacher

