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Headteacher: Mr A Lincoln BA Hons.

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to share our concerns about the increasing impact of social media on our students, particularly those in Years 5 and 6, and how it is affecting their well-being and behaviour both inside and outside of school.

Across all four of our UKS2 classes, we are increasingly having issues brought to our attention as a result of the use of social media platforms outside of school hours. This is not only impacting on the emotional health of our children but also creating challenges within the classroom and on the playground. Some of the issues connected with social media use in primary age pupils include:

1. **Cyberbullying** – Experiencing or witnessing bullying through social media channels. This can lead to feelings of anxiety, distress, and isolation that carry over into the school day.
2. **Inappropriate Content** – Social media exposes children to inappropriate content that they may not be emotionally equipped to process. This can contribute to confusion, fear, and distractions that affect their concentration and behaviour at school.
3. **Peer Pressure and Social Comparison** – The pressure to conform to trends or maintain a certain online image can lead to low self-esteem and unhealthy comparisons among pupils. This is particularly concerning for children at this age, as they are still developing their sense of identity and social skills.
4. **Sleep Disruption** – The use of social media late at night is often linked to poor sleep patterns, which can result in tiredness and lack of focus in school the following day.
5. **Impact on Social Skills** – Increased time spent on screens can limit face-to-face interaction, hindering the development of essential social skills and emotional intelligence.

As a school, we are committed to supporting your child's development in all aspects of their education, including their mental and emotional well-being. We would like to work together with you to ensure that pupils understand the importance of responsible technology use and the potential risks involved.

To help address these challenges, we encourage you to consider the following actions:
- **Monitor and Set Boundaries** – Regularly check the technology your child is using and set clear guidelines on appropriate usage, including time limits and the types of content they can access.
- **Open Conversations** – Encourage open and honest conversations with your child about their online experiences, helping them feel comfortable sharing any concerns they may have.
- **Model Responsible Use** – Setting a positive example of healthy online behaviour can have a significant impact on how children engage with social media.
- **Use of Age-Appropriate Platforms** – Many social media platforms have minimum age requirements (e.g. 13 years old for WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.). We recommend adhering to these guidelines to ensure your child's safety and well-being. Please see the poster on age guidelines at the bottom of this letter.

As part of our commitment in preparing pupils to use technology appropriately, we are introducing a new AI unit as part of our Year 6 computing curriculum. More information will be sent to the parents and carers of Year 6 pupils this week.

We are also watching with interest the 'Smartphone Free childhood' movement and its potential adoption in a number of local schools. We aim to gather parent opinion on this issue in due course.

Courage ✝ Faith ✝ Hope ✝ Love

We understand that navigating social media can be challenging, but by working together, we hope to support pupils to use technology platforms responsibly and positively at an age appropriate level.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us provide a safe and nurturing environment for all students.

Kind regards

Mr Lincoln and the UKS2 Teaching Team

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

Why are there age restrictions on social media platforms?
Many social media platforms have an age restriction of 13 years or over. This is because you have to be at least 13 years old to give consent for your personal data to be collected and processed.

What is the minimum age for UK account holders on these social media platforms?

13	16
Facebook	Vimeo
Instagram	Telegram
Snapchat	Tumblr
TikTok	
X (formerly Twitter)	
Pinterest	
Twitch	
Reddit	
Messenger	
Discord	
Skype	
YouTube	
WhatsApp	

The above age restrictions are based on the age required by the individual platform. This may differ from the age ratings suggested on app stores such as Google Play or App Store.