

1 December 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I write to you about some concerns we have involving social media use with youngsters.

For the vast majority of the time social media is a very positive form of communicating; however, we have also recently been addressing where the misuse of social media has caused social issues, including anxiety, for some children and has also disrupted their learning.

Also, to make you aware of a new trend going around schools where social media platforms are being used to humiliate the school and/ or the staff, as well as making false accusations. The platforms being used have been tik tok, instagram, facebook and twitter.

As I am sure you appreciate, these incidents can also throw up significant safeguarding concerns whereby children and young people may find themselves in a video/ image or inappropriate comments posted on social media without giving consent or any knowledge of this.

I would therefore ask you to ensure that your child is aware of the consequences of any such actions and that their school and The Societas Trust have policies for dealing with such matters, which may include referring the matter to the police.

Please also rest assured that the Trust has a 'zero tolerance' approach to any abuse of any member of its staff, including through social media.

As a Trust, we address the safe use of social media both within the curriculum and in assemblies, and have extensive safeguards in place to ensure any material accessed on-line in school is age appropriate.

Indeed, nearly all social media sites have a minimum age for users of 13 years old; many require users to be 16 years of age. The following webpage can help you identify the minimum age for each of the popular social media sites: <https://parentinfo.org/article/under-13s-and-social-media>

Finally, I would like to ask for your support in ensuring your child is not using social media sites away from school until they reach an age recommended by the site themselves. The below link gives helpful tips and support to parents about online safety and the use of social media and how to talk to your child about this: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety>

Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

*Jon Lovatt*

*Great Learning Opportunities for all!*

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