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Headteacher: Justin Burt  
Deputy Headteacher: Jo Wratten

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March

Dear parents of children in Years 5 and 6,

### **Children's use of social media**

It has recently been brought to our attention that there have been issues arising from the use of social media outside of school. This has resulted in some children becoming upset, feeling threatened and in some cases not wanting to come to school as a result.

We have spoken to all the children in Y5 and Y6 today about their use of social media.

When the children are in school there are never any issues around social media as they have no access to their phones during the day (they are handed in to the office) and any laptop/pc/ipad use is closely supervised. We also always do our best to help children resolve any difficulties they have with each other if they are unable to sort it out themselves.

We do recognise, though, that the interactions children have at school may act as a springboard for social media conversations outside school and we know that the social media conversations that happen outside school can be brought into school.

However, some of the problems with children's social media use are as follows:

- Not talking to someone face to face can lead to interactions that can become inappropriate, unkind and even threatening because of the remoteness involved.
- Children can feel pressurised into responding and getting involved in interactions that they may not feel comfortable with.
- Unlike a comment in the playground or the classroom, when an unkind statement is received in the form of a message, it stays there. This can lead to increased anxiety and upset.

Some of the most popular social media platforms we know children to be using and their age restrictions are:

- WhatsApp - 16
- Instagram - 13
- Snapchat - 13
- TikTok - 13



So, clearly if we are sticking to the guidelines of the different providers, no primary age children should be using any form of social media. However we need to accept that some children have access to social media without parents' knowledge; that they might put pressure on their parents to allow them to use it; or that parents might not be concerned with their children's use.

Unfortunately, though, issues around inappropriate social media use can be upsetting for children and parents. It can also be very time consuming for school staff who should be spending their time delivering high quality teaching and learning rather than resolving disputes between children over social media use outside of school.

We hope that this is already happening, but we advise parents to:

- Monitor what your children are doing with their phones/tablets etc,
- Talk to your children about being safe, kind and respectful when using technology,
- Most importantly, limit the amount of time used and what they have access to.

This can be achieved by using such tools as:

- Family link (an android app which can also be used on iphones where you can control the amount of time devices can be used for and what can be accessed)
- Restrictions tools on iphones
- Making your expectations as parents very clear about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable (for example: no devices in bedrooms; handing the device over to an adult at a set time each day; asking permission to download new apps or access new content online)

Here are a few links and resources that may also be helpful for you:

- [apps.lgfl.net](http://apps.lgfl.net)
- [screentime.lgfl.net](http://screentime.lgfl.net)
- [parentsafe.lgfl.net](http://parentsafe.lgfl.net)

I am certain that we, as teachers and parents, want to ensure that the children in our care learn to use technology safely and responsibly and that they develop positive values as a result. It is important therefore that we all work together to make this happen. If you have any queries about the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact the staff in Years 5 or 6.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Burtt', written in a cursive style.

J. Burtt