



# Orchard Primary & Pre-School

13 March 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

## Social Media Use Outside School

Once again, I feel that I need to bring to your attention the issues that we are currently having at school over the group use of social media apps outside of school hours.

There are several groups of pupils using social media to be persistently unkind about other pupils over platforms such as Snapchat and WhatsApp. We understand that this has included both sharing unkind comments about pupils and sharing unkind images or memes of the pupils. Although this bullying activity is not happening on the school site, it then affects behaviour, anxiety and subsequently lesson time and the learning of pupils in school.

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 and Tik Tok. Whilst there is no age restriction for watching videos on YouTube, users need to be **13 or older** to have their own YouTube account (enabling them to subscribe to other channels such as videos, post comments, share their own content and flag inappropriate content).

The online world is a minefield for children and the situation has changed significantly in the last 10-15 years – a whole range of unlimited content, both good and bad, is only a few clicks away. Once something has been posted on social media, it is very hard to get rid of. Threatening and abusive content could result in police involvement if a child is over the age of 10.

If you do allow your child to access social media, I would ask parents to be vigilant and monitor what children are posting online. Just like their interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. Some strategies that are known to be successful include:

- Monitoring your child's phone for the apps that are downloaded.
- Enacting parental controls on phones and consoles.
- Reviewing the messages they send on platforms and apps – making this part of a daily or weekly routine.
- Setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices.

- Encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing.

As a school we are responding to this with additional teaching during computing, PHSE lessons and in 1:1 conversations and teaching opportunities as they arise. We would also like to remind parents and carers that there are some excellent resources available on our school website that we would encourage you to read.

<https://cherryorchard.secure-primariesite.net/online-safety-newsletters/>

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Thank you for your co-operation.

Kind Regards

*Sarah Bitcon*

Sarah Bitcon  
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