



November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Issues with use of social media

We have today been dealing with an incident involving some Year 7 students who have been using snapchat, a social media messaging platform. Problems have arisen where:

- other non-Year 7 users were added to or joined to the group (lack of privacy/security)
- an older, identified student joined the group and uploaded an inappropriate image
- a young person from another school was added to the group and posted offensive sexist, homophobic and racist comments (this is being reported to police and their school's safeguarding lead).

I am very pleased that some of our students felt able to speak out about what they had seen, and alerted our safeguarding team. We have worked swiftly to identify the perpetrators and have already taken action regarding them. Police will be made aware of the content to assess whether they believe further action should now be taken. We have also spoken with all of Year 7 today to remind them that snapchat has a user minimum age requirement of 13 years (so no-one in Year 7 is old enough legally to be using it), and to reinforce our expectations on responsible, respectful internet use.

For parents, guidance on the risks of snapchat can be found at the links below, and you can find regular updates on e-safety posted in our weekly e-bulletin:

- <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/snapchat-safety-a-how-to-guide-for-parents/>
- <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/parents-a-guide-to-snapchat/>

Can I thank parents of Year 7 in advance for having discussions with your child this evening to reinforce the Home-School Agreement, and the commitment to:

- *support the school's policy and help prevent my child/children from signing up to services such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube whilst they are underage (13+ years in most cases)*
- *close online accounts if I/we/teachers find that these accounts are active for my underage child/children*

Yours sincerely

Mr R Peters
Deputy Headteacher