

25 June 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am writing to you to highlight concerns around the issue of online safety. As I am sure you are aware, social media sites have been the topic of numerous headlines outlining the negative effects on students' self-esteem and mental health. There is also a rise in the popularity of online gaming sites which often include elements of suicide and self-harm; they include warnings that they are not intended for children, but often the graphics are clearly aimed at and entice a younger audience. Unfortunately, a large number of the pastoral issues we deal with at school stem from inappropriate use of these sites and there have been a number of stories in the news of tragedies linked to the influence of online gaming and social media.

With this in mind, I would ask for your support in educating and monitoring your child's online activity. Students in year 7-11 are required to place their mobiles in their lockers upon entering the building so that they can have no online activity or distractions while engaged in the business of learning. While we educate students in school about responsible online behaviour through PSHE and assemblies, we cannot be responsible for your child's activities outside of school hours. There are many steps which can be taken as a parent or guardian to ensure your child's online safety, and I would encourage you to take this responsibility seriously by setting appropriate parental controls and checking your child's mobile devices regularly to monitor the sites she visits and the content of what she engages with online. Many of these sites require users to be of a certain age, and these guidelines should be followed and enforced.

There are a number of websites which offer advice and guidance to parents about educating and monitoring your child's online activity, and many of these links can be found on our website. Some of these include:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-technology>

<http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides/parental_controls.html

Thank you for your support as we work together to achieve the best outcomes for your daughter. I am sure that her safety, in both the real and online worlds, is both of our top priority.

Yours sincerely

Ms H Duggan
Headteacher