



October 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian

PUPIL USE OF MULTI-MEDIA GROUPS

I am writing to you because it has been brought to our attention that many tutor groups and friendship groups set up “group chats” on their multi-media devices (phones, I-pads, computers).

The majority of pupils use these safely and responsibly as a means of keeping up to date with school work and discussing homework. However, we are aware that some pupils are using this as a means to abuse, bully and be unpleasant to others in a very public forum.

It is very important that home and school work in partnership to support your children to use multi-media devices safely, appropriately and responsibly. Therefore, I wish to advise you of the following:

- i) it is illegal for pupils under 13 to be on social media sites eg. Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram
- ii) to engage in abuse of others and transmit abusive texts or images is a criminal offence.
- iii) as a school we advise parents whose children have been subject to such abuse to report this to the police.

We would like you to discuss these issues with your child/children. Furthermore, please check their devices and delete sites that are illegal, as well as blocking their ability to access these sites in future. We would advise you to regularly monitor your child/children's use of multi-media devices. Tell them not to give out their personal details to anyone other than their close friends, and not engage in conversations with people they do not know. Also, it is important that phones are password protected but it is essential that you are aware of the password.

I must remind you that the use of mobile phones in school is banned, and all phones must be handed into the appropriate Head of Year's office at the start of the school day. Pupils are also reminded that the phones should be collected at the end of the school day and not switched on until they are away from the immediate school area. Failure to do so could result in the phone being confiscated until arrangements can be made for parents/guardians to collect it.

Principal: Graham Stapleton
Headteacher: Keith Barbrook

The school reserves the right to apply sanctions if pupils misuse their phones. We shall also inform the police of any illegal use. Attached is a letter sent to parents/guardians in December 2014, advising you of the laws applicable to misuse of multi-media devices.

Finally, please talk to them about their use of language advising them that 'text speak' in other contexts is not an acceptable use of their English language skills.

I thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

MRS M ROBERTSON
Head of Lower School/Head of Safeguarding