

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a result of increasing reports of inappropriate use of Social Media, this communication is to give parents some guidance and support on how you can ensure your children are safe and responsible online.

Our School PSHE programme explores the laws and regulations of safe internet use and we provide guidance on this to all of your young people, however as parents and carers you play the most important part in ensuring that this knowledge is used in practice.

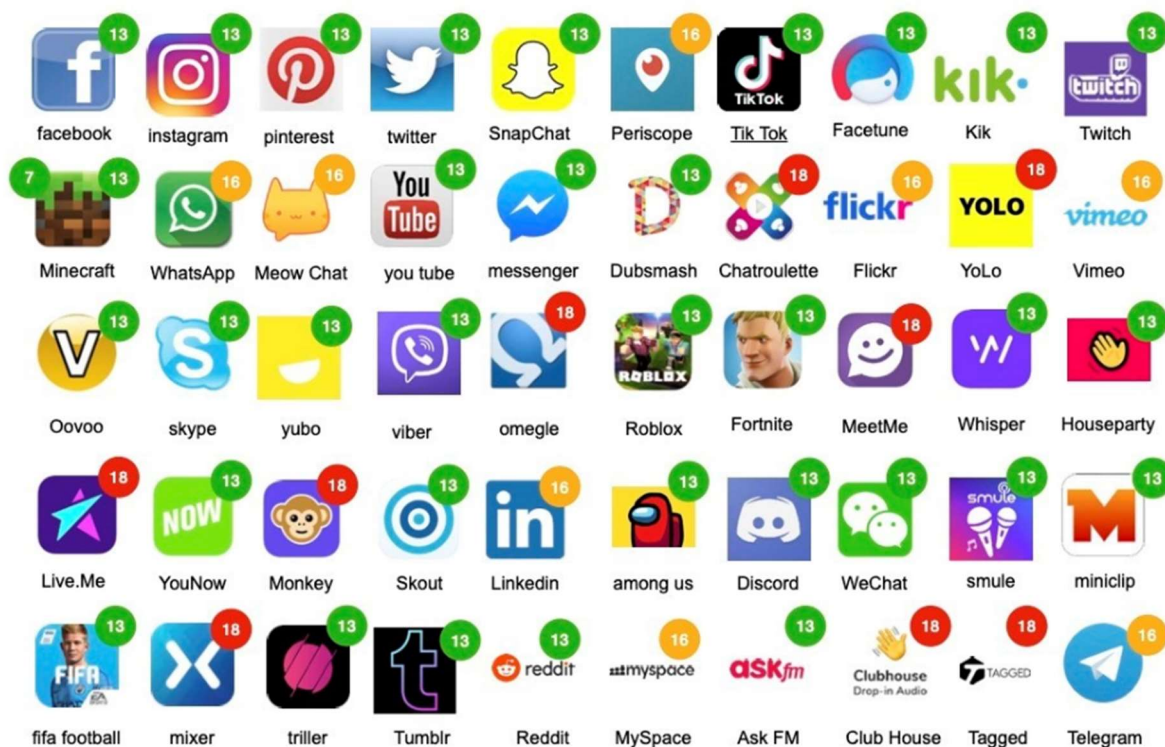
The increased independence that our young people have through technology can be both positive and negative. Technology and mobile phones can bring their own set of risks. Whilst a necessary item to allow students a degree of independence and responsibility, it is advisable that parents and guardians monitor the use of mobile phones for under 18s. Our children can present themselves very differently on online platforms, or be subjected themselves to behaviour that would not normally be socially acceptable in face-to-face situations.

Speaking to your son/daughter about how they use their mobile phone can allow for conversations to be raised and provide a chance for your child to air any concerns they may have about their own phone usage or any negative interactions they may have received. For many young people, raising a concern themselves can be extremely difficult, awkward and overwhelming, so regularly checking in removes this barrier for them. If this is an expectation, young people tend to think twice before posting something, or having something on their devices that they do not want their parents to view.

In addition to this letter - and as part of the partnership between school and parents and carers - this week teaching staff completed training regarding safety online and how to support students in the responsible use of Social Media as part of our CPD Programme.

Please find the information below regarding age restrictions for Social Media Sites which you may or may not be aware of and useful sites that will provide further guidance for you.

If you have concerns regarding Social Media usage, you can report accounts which are being misused to the social media companies directly and report to Thames Valley Police if you feel a crime has been committed.



Keeping Children Safe!

Helpful links:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Internet-Matters-Guide-Official-UK-Social-Media-Guidance.pdf>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/social-media/>