



9th December 2020

RE: Social media and keeping your child safe

Dear Parents/Carers

During the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, children and young people have been spending more time at home and online. While the internet and social media can be a great way to stay in touch with their friends, it also brings risk. For children and young people the online life is real life and it can lead children to feel a range of emotions and have a profound impact on them mentally, socially and emotionally.

As a parent, it can be incredibly difficult to know how to support your child online; adults of course, did not experience this world when we were growing up. I am writing today to share with you some advice from the NSPCC on how you can support the young person/people in your care with the challenges of social media.

The NSPCC recommends that adults start by building in regular conversations with young people about their internet usage. It can be difficult to start a conversation about this, but having a conversation with your son/daughter about their online experiences, just like you would about their school work, will help your child feel more relaxed and mean that when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you. The NSPCC suggest that parents/carers:

- reassure your child that you are interested in their life, offline and online.
- recognise that they will be using the internet to research homework as well talking to their friends.
- ask your child to show you what they enjoy doing online or apps they're using so you can understand them.
- be positive but also open about anything you're worried about. You could say "I think this site's really good" or "I'm a little worried about things I've seen here."
- ask them if they're worried about anything, and let them know they can come to you.
- ask them about their friends online and how they know they are who they say they are.
- listen for the reasons why your child wants to use apps or site you don't think are suitable, so you can talk about these together.
- ask your child what they think is okay for children of different ages so they feel involved in the decision making.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>



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I would urge you to look at the information on the NSPCC website as it includes lots of really helpful information, and monitor your child's online usage, particularly in relation to WhatsApp groups, some of which have large numbers of young people involved.

At Rivers Academy, we undertake considerable work with students to support them in their understanding of life online and its dangers, including assemblies, PSHE lessons, transition mentoring lessons, projects on social media, as well as small group work with students. The academy code of conduct also includes a section on the acceptable use of IT. This work, however, is a partnership with parents and we would appreciate your support.

If you are concerned or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tim Wormald
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*'To be able to dream about the future, while being inspired
in the present to reach those dreams'* Dr. Russell J. Quaglia

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