



Stepney All Saints School

We Learn Together | We Pray Together | We Achieve Together

Headteacher: Mr P Woods

1st December 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Incidents and safeguarding concerns linked to students misusing phones or social media have sadly become common in society. Nowadays, teenagers have access to technology that can pose a risk to their physical and mental wellbeing, and that of their peers, and can have profound consequences on behaviour. As a school, we deal firmly and appropriately with any student who sends or passes on malicious messages or content or brings offensive material into school via any means. As a school, our first priority is to keep our students safe.

As a parent, it is important that you are aware of how your child is using their mobile phone or laptop. For instance, all social media apps are for students upwards of 13 years of age unless parental permission is given. Nevertheless, we have become aware that some students are using apps such as Discord, which is for ages 17+ on iOS devices. Age ratings are in place in order to keep children safe from exposure to harmful or inappropriate material.

You should have rules in place in the home regarding the use of technology. Monitoring of use should take place together with conversations about online safety. Here are some examples of mobile phone rules for the whole family:

- Mobile devices stay out of bedrooms after an agreed time.
- Mobile and other devices are charged in a family area overnight.

You might find it helps to create an agreement that both you and your child sign. An example can be found on the following link: <https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Family-Agreement.pdf>

We would like to suggest some conversations starters that you may find helpful when discussing online activity with your child:

- Are they happy to show what they are doing online? If not, why not?
- What apps are being used? Are they age appropriate and being used appropriately? The following link can be used to check on the suitability of apps: <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews>
- How many friends do they have online? Are these friends they have actually met? Are settings on private?

In recent years, a range of monitoring software programmes have appeared to allow parents and carers to see what children are doing online and set digital boundaries. The iOS platform on iPhone and iPad has built-in features that offer family controls for free and Google Family Link is a free Android-only app that allows parents to control children's Android devices through their iPhone or Android phone. Parents can set time limits, manage apps children can use by approving or blocking them and set device bedtime. There are also apps that you purchase such as Circle, which allows you to manage screen time and monitor not just some, but ALL websites and apps. You can set the rules for apps like WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, Discord (and many more) across all your family's connected devices. Advice on how to set controls on mobile phones can be found on the following link:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

We do, of course, work with our students to highlight the above; however, your support is invaluable and makes a significant contribution to their safety and wellbeing.

Yours faithfully

N. Jones

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We will achieve excellence and inspire generations