

November 2021

Acceptable Use of Social Media Letter to Parents and Pupils

RE: Parents' and Pupils' use of social media

Dear Parents/Carers and Pupils,

Unfortunately, we do have yet another issue relating to the use of social media which I need to make you aware of and with which I need your support. There is currently a trend where pupils put manipulated videos on 'Tik Tok' or other social media platforms which contain images of staff. These videos are completely inappropriate and damaging as well as very hurtful to good members of staff. Any children found to be involved with this will be **permanently excluded** from our school and will be reported to the police for unauthorised use of images. It is also the case that some misguided group of individuals are creating Instagram accounts with staff names and pictures. Once again, this is contrary to the law and we will be informing the police.

I know that you will share my disgust at this type of behaviour and many of you have contacted us to make us aware of these videos for which I would like to thank you. The vast majority of our pupils are horrified by some of these videos and have also reported them to us. Please can you check your children's use of social media and protect and safeguard them from becoming involved with this type of behaviour.

Harrytown Catholic High School understands that whilst there may be some benefits of using social media and the internet, it has recently been brought to my attention that some pupils and parents may be using social media to criticise and abuse the school, its staff members and pupils, and some decisions that have been made.

Harrytown Catholic High School is committed to setting the best example possible for our pupils and I would like to remind parents and pupils that their conduct online can have an impact on what children think is right and wrong.

Parents and pupils should not, under any circumstances:

- Post defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents, pupils, the school or its employees.
- Complain about the school's values, methods and decisions on social media.
- Attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.
- Post anonymously or under an alias to evade guidance given in this letter and the school's **Social Media Code of Conduct**. The school has employed a professional organisation to monitor social media content relating to school on accounts and platforms to ensure any negative comments are taken down or actioned as soon as possible.

In the event that the school discovers or receives any evidence of online abuse, we will take the appropriate action, which will include considering our legal options to deal with defamatory or libellous activity on social media. A current investigation is ongoing into a number of defamatory posts on 'tik tok'.

'I have come that they have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

Harrytown, Romiley, Stockport, SK6 3BU

Tel: 0161 430 5277

www.harrytownschool.org

Headteacher: Mr K Turmeau G.Mus., PG Dip., MA., NPQH

The Disciplinary Power of Teachers: Pupils' Conduct Outside the School Gates, for the purposes of our policy will be summarised thus:

- Teachers have a statutory power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers a specific statutory power to regulate pupils' behaviour in these circumstances 'to such extent as is reasonable'.
- In response to all non-criminal bad behaviour and bullying which occurs anywhere off the school premises and which is witnessed by a staff member or reported to the school, including the inappropriate use of social media, the school will impose punishments in line with the negative impact on the school, staff or other pupils.
- The teacher may discipline pupils for misbehaviour when the child is:
 - taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity or
 - travelling to and from school or
 - wearing school uniform or
 - in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school or misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, or
 - could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or - poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or - could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

The headteacher may also request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems arise between parents. With the permission of the parent, the headteacher will view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

Whilst I understand there may be incidents that cause you to feel disheartened or frustrated, posting abusive, critical or negative messages on social media is not a constructive way to resolve any problems that may have occurred.

If a parent/carer has a complaint, you should contact the school directly and in accordance with our **Complaints Procedures Policy**.

Alternatively, you can use the contact form to indicate that you wish to have a discussion with school. This will be forwarded to the most appropriate person to deal with the issue. Hours of school business are 08:45 – 16:00 Monday to Friday.

In conclusion and to be absolutely clear, the school will not tolerate any of the following:

- Sending abusive messages to pupils, their parents, teachers or staff members
- Sending abusive messages about pupils, their parents, teachers or staff members
- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about other parents, pupils, teachers or the school
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the school's values and methods

Yours sincerely



K Turmeau
Headteacher