

14<sup>th</sup> June 2022



Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you as we, the school, need your support to stop the rise in mis-use of social media and mobile devices that we have witnessed during half term and over recent evenings and weekends.

During half term, when students were off school, we saw a rise in the number of incidents of online abuse via social media such as TIKTOK, Snapchat and text message. This is also a regular occurrence on weekends and on some evenings.

Many of these begin with initially trivial comments or events but are escalated beyond all proportion by students who were not originally part of the situation who feel it is appropriate to continue "stirring", passing messages between "sides", or encouraging students to resolve their differences either physically or verbally. On some occasions parents/carers have become involved and escalated some of these incidents even further making it very difficult for us a school to resolve issues.

We are truly dismayed at the content of some of the messages that we have seen. We also know that these are not things that the students would say to each other in person and equally they are not what we expect from an Oasis student.

**We would like to encourage you to have a conversation with your child about their online presence and the potential consequences of their actions both online and in person.** While it may seem anonymous and impersonal, nothing posted online can ever truly be taken back, and traces of who posted what content was posted can be uncovered.

Please be aware that any person posting such material could potentially be committing a criminal offence.

The **Malicious Communications Act 1988** states

*Any person who sends to another person—*

- *(a) a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys—*
  - *a message which is indecent or grossly offensive;*
  - *a threat; or*
  - *information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender; or*
- *(b) any article or electronic communication which is, in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature,*

*is guilty of an offence if his purpose, or one of his purposes, in sending it is that it should, so far as falling within paragraph (a) or (b) above, cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or to any other person to whom he intends that it or its contents or nature should be communicated.*



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Unfortunately, we as a school are limited in our ability to control or sanction content posted online. It is important that students understand anyone found participating or encouraging these behaviours risk significant disciplinary consequences.

My advice is to do the following in ensuring the appropriate use of social media:

- **Set limits** – be strict on times in which your child can use social media, for example don't let them take phones to bed.
- **Educate** – teach your child how to be responsible when using social media. Teach them what to do if they see cyberbullying.
- **Follow your child on social media** – this is a good way to monitor their use.
- **Restrict** – ensure they have the highest settings in terms of privacy. Be mindful that they may follow people they don't know or even be followed by strangers.
- **Be curious** – ask your child about their friends list/followers or posts you may have seen. Follow up any concerns you have.
- **Remove access** – if your child uses social media inappropriately remove their device(s).

As always, thank you for your continued support and I really hope that this is something you can support us with.

Mr McEvoy  
Principal



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