

3 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

In the interests of supporting you with keeping your child safe, I am writing to inform you that we have been alerted to a recent development in the way some children are choosing to use their mobile phones. We know that parents/carers worry about this and we are committed to supporting you with the education of our pupils around this matter.

It has been brought to our attention that some pupils are sharing indecent images of themselves and/or others via social media, in particular, via the mobile application Snapchat. There are also a number of Apps that appear to be something else when, in fact, they are ways of hiding stored images.

We feel that, in the interests of keeping safe, all pupils and parents should be aware of the following UK laws regarding these actions:

Protection of Children Act 1978

Section 1: Take (or permit to be taken)/make/distribute indecent photographs/pseudo photographs of children: creates various offences regarding the taking, making or distribution of indecent photographs of a child. (Clarification of this law and its legal implications can be found at <https://www.iwf.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-assess-and-remove-content/laws-and-assessment-levels/protection-of-children-act>)

Criminal Justice Act 1988 Section 160

Possession of indecent photograph of child: creates an offence of possessing any indecent photographs of children under 18 years.

Young people are often unaware that they can still be dealt with for sexual offences against a child; these laws are not just for adults.

It is our advice that all parents should discuss this with their children as soon as possible to enforce the appropriate boundaries and promote safe use of electronic devices and social media. We have to inform you that in any case involving indecent images of a minor, it is our professional duty to inform both the Police and/or Children's Services – as well as parents/carers.

Once we return in September we will continue to lead assemblies and education about the safe use of devices through our curriculum and thank you for your support with this difficult matter.

Yours,

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