

SOCIAL MEDIA: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The minimum age to open an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Kik, and Snapchat is 13. What's App is 16. For others it is 17. YouTube requires account holders to be 18, but a 13-year-old can sign up with a parent's permission. Despite these clearly stated and published age restrictions, large and growing numbers of children 12 and under are using social media networks, often with their parent's knowledge and consent.

We have been very clear in our message to students about the need to always think very carefully before posting anything online, be that text or image. We have spoken to students about digital footprints and never to forget that as soon as something is posted it remains there forever and can be retrieved even after it has been deleted. Students are often under the impression that with an app such as Snapchat which is renowned for its content being uploaded and then disappearing after several seconds that images and texts have gone. This is not the case.

Any content which is posted online can be altered, reposted, manipulated or copied. If anyone creates or posts inappropriate, offensive or even illegal content on their profile this could get them into trouble with their parents, school, friends and even the police, depending on the nature of the material.

It is important that if you allow your child onto social networking sites that their privacy settings are checked regularly. Also that you speak to your child about the importance of not giving out any personal/identifiable information. Posting photos can enable someone to identify a location or build up a picture about a person.

While we make every effort to address any issue relating to social media that impacts on school life we cannot police all of this activity, particularly if it takes place out of the school day, over the weekend or in the school holidays. Our advice if you are concerned about the nature of any social media comments/posts by any young person that are directed towards your child that you go immediately to the police. Please emphasise to your child that they can block other users and that they should tell a trusted adult if anything concerns them.