



The Orchard Primary School
Nurture Learn Grow

The Orchard Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Christine Haslam

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Dear Parents and Carers

It has come to our attention that some Year 6 pupils have been using social media applications (in particular TikTok and Snapchat) to create false accounts in other pupils' names and use these accounts to send inappropriate and rude messages to each other. As we are sure you will agree, this behaviour is not acceptable and is causing distress among pupils who are either receiving these messages or are being accused of sending them.

Under UK Law, the **misuse** of social media can be considered as harassment both to individuals who are receiving messages or those that are wrongly accused of sending them: "Harassment can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications or contact upon an individual in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person."

Whilst we understand that the idea of socially connecting via these apps is very appealing to young children, both of these platforms have age restrictions for a reason - due to the content that can be viewed and due to the risk to younger pupils:

TikTok requires that users be at least 13 years old to use the app and that anyone under the age of 18 must have approval of a parent or guardian

Snapchat has a minimum age requirement of 13 years old, and users who enter a date of birth under 13 can't set up an account.

In school, it is also incredibly challenging to deal with the issues that the use of these apps create, as children use them off the school premises. We would strongly urge you to discourage your children from using these apps on their devices, but if you feel unable to do this, we have included some advice on how to keep your children safe on social media on the next page.

Thank you for your support in this matter,

Ms Campbell

Year 6 Lead



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Keeping your children safe on social networks

There is no guarantee to keeping children entirely safe, but there are some golden tips:

- Educate yourself on what the various social networks and apps do
- Ask your children to show you which social media sites they use and what they like about them
- Agree with your children when they can join a social networking site and create their profile with them
- Help them to set privacy, location and tagging settings
- Show them how to report people and inappropriate conversations using the 'help' or 'report' tab, and keep a copy of the conversation as evidence
- Teach your children how to block or ignore people (or learn how to do this together), and create a sentence with your children that they can use if they wish to exit an online conversation that makes them uncomfortable
- Set boundaries about which sites they can use and for how long
- Teach your children not to share any personal details (eg passwords, address, their real names and their schools)
- Use the site yourself - you can be your children's friend on Facebook or follower on Twitter
- Explain that friends should be people they know and meeting people they know only online can be dangerous
- Report directly to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) if someone is trying to meet up with your child, or if you think your child is in immediate or imminent danger
- Set rules about what they should and shouldn't post
- Visit the social media sites and familiarise yourself with each site's online safety guidelines; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat all have safety and reporting facilities
- Encourage your children to talk to you if they see anything that upsets them.