

# HENDON SCHOOL

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*'Learning Together Across the World'*

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the impact negative usage of social media is having on the year group.

Over the last few months I have spent a considerable amount of time dealing with issues that have originated from the use of social media apps such as SnapChat and TikTok and I feel the time is right to reach out to ask for your support with this.

I am seeing increasing instances of social media used to victimise students. Photos and videos are being created and manipulated that are designed to be derogatory to a student or group of students. Messages are being sent with derogatory comments, again targeting individuals and groups. Students are incurring sanctions due to their social media use and in some cases jeopardising their place at Hendon School. Unfortunately, much of this usage takes place away from school and where we have less control over phone usage. Mobile phones are currently banned in Hendon School however we do allow students to have them in their bags and blazers providing they do not use them during the school day.

So, how can you support us? I would advise that student's social media usage is closely monitored and that mobile phones are checked regularly. Familiarise yourself with the apps and platforms that your child uses and make sure you know how to check all the various accounts that your child has. SnapChat for example has an option for users to have multiple accounts that can be switched between easily but also easily hidden. I would urge that you check through all of these apps on your child's phone. It may not be your child who is generating harmful content or messages however there have been numerous instances of these being sent to group chats and large numbers of students having them on their devices.

If you do come across any content that you think should not be on your child's phone I would ask that you let me know about this; not to punish students but to be able to put whatever support they may need in place to allow them to avoid these issues going forward.

There are also parental controls and restrictions that can be placed on mobile phones. If you are unsure how to do this please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will support you with this.

Social media has gained a lot of attention recently, with the Netflix show 'Adolescence' and petitions amongst Members of Parliament to have smart phones banned in schools and I share the concerns highlighted by both of these. Social media is now a part of our society and can be used for positive things; the school has its own social media pages, feel free to give us a follow on Instagram to see all the fantastic things that the school does, but there are some really serious potential pitfalls that also come with social media and app usage and I do not want our students to fall foul of these.

Thank you in advance for your support with this. If you have any questions or concerns please get in touch and I will be more than happy to help.

Regards,

*Martin Dickie*

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Head of Year 8

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