

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



27th February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

RE: Responsible Social Media Usage

As educators we recognise the profound impact that social media has on the lives of our children today. While social media platforms offer numerous opportunities for connection, learning, and self-expression, they also pose significant risks if not used responsibly. As such, I am reaching out to highlight the importance of guiding your child in the appropriate use of social media and making them aware of its potential dangers.

Cyberbullying Awareness: Sadly this has become a prevalent issue on social media platforms. Teach your child about the harmful effects of cyberbullying, how to recognise it, and what actions they can take if they experience or witness it. Encourage open communication so they feel comfortable coming to you with any concerns.

Setting Boundaries: Establish clear guidelines and boundaries for social media usage within your family. This may include designated screen-free times, restrictions on certain platforms, or parental supervision for younger children.

Balanced Screen Time: Excessive screen time can have negative effects on mental and physical health. Encourage your child to take regular breaks from social media and engage in offline activities such as hobbies, sports, or spending time with family and friends.

Digital Footprint: Remind your child that what they post online can have long-lasting consequences. Employers, colleges, and even friends may form opinions based on their online presence. Encourage them to think before they post and consider the potential impact on their future.

Risk of Predators: Children may unknowingly share personal information online, making them vulnerable to predators. Predators may use social media platforms to groom and manipulate children into dangerous situations.

Impact on Mental Health: Constant exposure to idealised images and curated lives on social media can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and anxiety. Comparing themselves to others can lead to a distorted sense of reality and negatively affect mental health.

Poor Academic Performance: Excessive use of social media can distract children from their studies, leading to decreased academic performance. The constant notifications and interruptions can disrupt concentration and focus.

Minimum age requirements: Each app has an age rating, many have a minimum age of 13 years, but you should check the age rating of individual apps to make sure. You know your child best and you may decide that they need to be a little bit older before they use certain apps. Please see the following page for a guide.

It is essential that parents and caregivers closely monitor their children's social media activity and offer guidance and assistance in navigating these platforms safely is imperative. Establishing open communication, setting clear boundaries, and fostering healthy digital habits play pivotal roles in minimising the adverse effects of social media on children. Engaging in transparent discussions about responsible social media use empowers children to navigate these platforms securely and confidently. Your ongoing guidance and support are invaluable in shaping their digital behaviours, which will prove beneficial as they transition into adulthood.





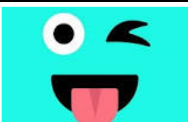

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Together, we can work towards fostering a positive and safe online environment for our children.

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Social Media Apps	Age ratings and features
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: newsfeed to share text, photos & videos, instant messaging, marketplace, friends, likes and comments
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: making & sharing short videos, lip-syncing.
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: photo & video sharing, livestreaming, stories, DMs, hashtags.
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: photo & video messaging, snaps, location sharing.
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: messaging, friends, photo sharing.
	Age rating: 13+ Main features: tweets (text with restricted character count), photo and video sharing, hashtags.

Yours faithfully



Ms A Barallon
Director of Learning