Long Lawford
Primary School

PARENTAL USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING
AND
INTERNET SITES

This document is to enable the Governing Board of the school to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under Section 175 and that the school complies with legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of children of The Education Act 2002

Adopted by the Governing Board:

Signed: …………………………………………   Chair of Governors

                     …………………………………………   Head teacher

Date: Autumn 2021

Date of next review: Autumn 2024

The review of this policy will be as and when required in response to national requirements and in light of continuous school-based monitoring and evaluation data.

OVERVIEW

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff. This document sets out this School's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents have used such facilities inappropriately. When we have referred to "parent" in this document, we also include carers; relatives; or anyone associated with the School.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of the School from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what the School considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures the School will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the School, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the School; and
- Set out the action the School will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKIG SITES BY PARENTS

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the School and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the School recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss / share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the School, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the School:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?

- Would private and confidential discussions with the School be more appropriate? E.g. if there are serious allegations being made / concerns being raised. Social media / internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if the School has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the School; any detrimental harm that the School may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY PARENTS

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the School (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the School, or using the School's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

The School considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the School/cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the School/staff at the School;
- Making defamatory statements about the School or staff at the School;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at the School;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence;
- Posting any comments about children at the School.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking / internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents / carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media. Please note that most social networking sites require the user to be at least 13 years old.
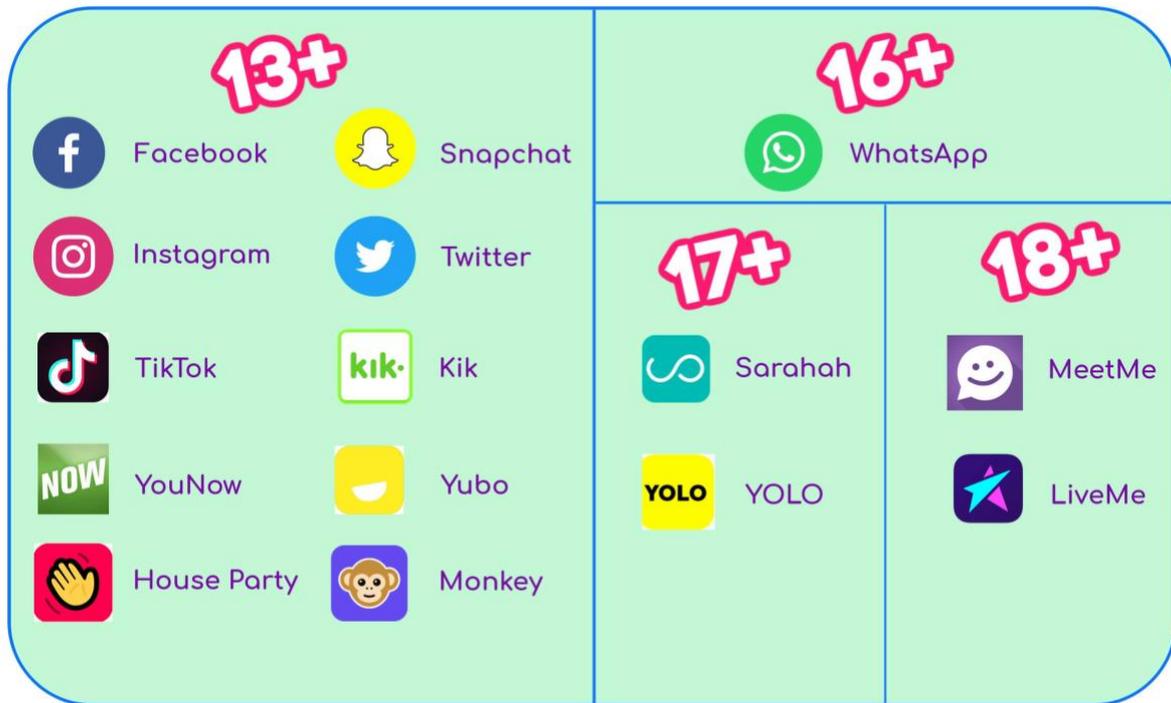
COMMON APPS AND THEIR AGE RESTRICTIONS:

13+
- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouNow
- House Party
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Kik
- Yubo
- Monkey

16+
- WhatsApp

17+
- Sarahah
- YOLO

18+
- MeetMe
- LiveMe

Image curtesy of Open View Education.

Further information about the latest apps/social media platforms and their age restrictions can be found at *https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/apps-guide/*

What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS

U **R18 RESTRICTED** **12**

bbfc **PEGI**

If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.

RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

U — Universal, suitable for all ages

PG — Parental Guidance required

12 — Suitable for people aged 12 and over

12A — Suitable for people aged 12 and over; anyone younger must be accompanied by an adult

15 — Suitable for people aged 15 and over

18 — Suitable for people aged 18 and over

R18 RESTRICTED — Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers

WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

Source: www.bbfc.co.uk

RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

3 www.pegi.info **7** www.pegi.info **12** www.pegi.info **16** www.pegi.info **18** www.pegi.info

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:

FEAR | DRUGS | IN-GAME PURCHASES | VIOLENCE | BAD LANGUAGE | DISCRIMINATION | GAMBLING | SEX

LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: www.pegi.info

NOS National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com
Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061

PROCEDURE THE SCHOOL WILL FOLLOW IF INAPPROPRIATE USE CONTINUES

The School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the School will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the School considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and / or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the School's concerns to you in writing, giving you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the Police where the School feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the School may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host / provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

USEFUL LINKS

LLPS Online Safety Policy -
https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/attachments/download.asp?file=1743&type=pdf

LLPS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy -
https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/attachments/download.asp?file=2840&type=pdf

LLPS Complaints Policy -
https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/attachments/download.asp?file=1695&type=pdf

LLPS Safeguarding website -
https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/page/?title=Safeguarding&pid=13

LLPS Expected Behaviour of Visitors / Parents on school premises - https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/attachments/download.asp?file=1239&type=pdf

National Online Safety - https://nationalonlinesafety.com/

Internet Matters - https://www.internetmatters.org/

Internet Society - https://www.internetsociety.org/about-internet-society/