



BABLAKE &
KING HENRY VIII
SCHOOL

BKHS King Henry VIII School Pastoral Letter

Dr MB Cuthbert (Deputy Head/DSL)

7 December 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Teachers, and in particular Form Tutors and Heads of Year are becoming increasingly worried with our pupil's seemingly unlimited and unregulated access to social media, out of school. As teachers, we often need to deal with and act on incidents that have taken place on social media within the home. We need your help to support us in our quest to keep our pupils safe, improve their respect for each other, develop their love for learning and enhance their wellbeing.

Guidance on social media and internet use within the home.

You only need to google for help on how to manage the social media use of your children and the internet produces an array of information and support. There are a number of particularly good sources I would like to draw your attention to:

Internet Matters: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/social-media-advice-hub/>

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Think u Know: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Young Minds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/social-media/>

The greatest challenge you will face as a parent is to maintain your expectations with respect to the social media use of your child as well as reigning them in when things get out of hand. We have had to face a new trend on TicTok where children are creating fan pages for schools. Unfortunately, much of the video content that some of our pupils have uploaded is damaging to the school's reputation and the wellbeing of our hard working and dedicated teachers. All the videos we have discovered have been reported and taken down, but they pop up constantly. Some pupils have added video footage that they have filmed in school. We have sanctioned these pupils according to our behaviour policy.

How can you help us?

We need your vigilance, help and support to ensure that our pupils demonstrate respect for others on social media and concentrate on their learning, rather than spend hours sharing and creating gossip that can be extremely damaging to the wellbeing of our pupils. Our PSHE programme for all year groups addresses online safety. Some pupils really listen and take on board what we teach them, others, however, continue to push the boundaries both morally and legally. We do find that pupils who push the boundaries, often experience more freedoms with mobile use within the home. We always encourage parents to not allow pupils access to social media when they are undertaking schoolwork or going to bed. I thought it might be useful to share a few of the topics we discuss in PSHE as well as the main points from these

topics. This does give you the opportunity to carry on the conversation within the home as well as help us to safeguard your child and improve their wellbeing.

How can going online affect our wellbeing?

There are lots of positives for children being online, however there can be negatives too. For some it can become overwhelming trying to keep up with friends, and the pressure can mount.

Many things can impact our online wellbeing, and you can take control of the choices made to reduce any negativity. Being aware of the impact of being online, just like you would be aware of the impact of offline activities, is the first step to managing your children's online wellbeing.

We can:

- manage the content that our children see,
- ensure interactions are suitable
- and manage how long they're online, in balance with other activities.

There are several things you can do to help support a child with their wellbeing online, including specific apps, and looking at settings.

Have regular conversations with your child

Give children the chance to talk about what they're experiencing online, what apps and sites they use and who they're talking to. Talking regularly, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed and mean that when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you. Remind them that it isn't just you that they can talk to – another trusted adult or a Childline counsellor might be easier sometimes.

Fall-outs with friends can affect children online, just as they do offline, and communicating online can lead to misunderstandings with friends. Encourage your child to look at the Childline website, which has lots of great advice articles:

- [Feeling good on social media](#)
- [Coping with stress](#)
- [Worries about the world](#)

Childline's [Calm zone](#) is also packed with tools and activities to help children de-stress and discover new techniques that can support them when they're feeling down. Young people can also talk to each other about their worries on the [Childline message boards](#).

Consider that what children see online is often through a filter. It isn't just images and videos that can be [filtered or edited](#), but bodies and lives too.

Take breaks

Our devices are designed to keep us coming back. Features like infinite scrolling, app notifications, auto play and rewards for playing games every day are all persuasive designs to increase our use.

Mobile and wearable tech such as phones and smart watches can make us feel like we're always online and it can help everyone to take a break sometimes, to help switch off from online pressures. You can use the settings on individual apps, or in the device settings to silence notifications for a period of time.

You can also utilise the 'do not disturb' mode available on most devices to mute calls and notifications, to help avoid distractions.

Use wellbeing settings and apps

There are sites and apps which are specifically designed to help children with their online wellbeing:

- [BBC Own it](#) which gives advice as they chat to their friends online.
- [Headspace for Kids](#) is an app to teach children the basics of mindfulness in a fun way. It's aimed at 3-12 year olds, with different content for the different age groups. Free for Headspace subscribers, limited access for non-subscribers.
- [JoyPoP](#) is an app designed to help users find their inner resilience to deal with the highs and lows in their day to day lives. By rating mood for the day, users are directed to complete different activities to help switch to positive emotions. App costs £6.99.

You can also find out what apps your child uses the most and have a look to see if there are wellbeing guides which explain their settings to help support children's wellbeing.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the National Online Safety Website:

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>

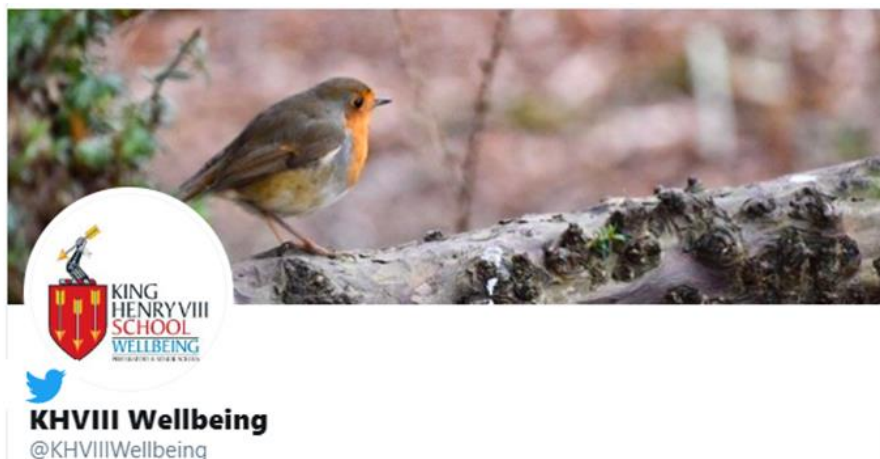
This is an outstanding resource for parents and carers of children and young people. It is regularly updated with clear and well-laid out guidance on apps, online safety, online gaming and security. It is free to sign up to as well. I have pasted an example with the title of **What Parents Need to Know About Age-Inappropriate Content** at the end of this letter. I have also added a copy of a poster which can be found in all classrooms and in key areas around school. This poster summarises safeguarding at BKHS King Henry VIII School.

May I take this opportunity to wish the whole of our community some much needed rest, friend and family time, over the Christmas holiday.

Many thanks for reading my pastoral letter,

Dr Cuthbert

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

"Inappropriate" means different things to different people. What's acceptable for one age group, for example, may be unsuitable for a slightly younger audience. Online, young people can chance upon inappropriate content in various ways – from pop-up ads to TikTok videos. The increasingly young age at which children become active in the digital world heightens the risk of them innocently running into something that they find upsetting or frightening. Trusted adults need to be able to help children be aware of what to do if they're exposed to age-inappropriate content.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Age-inappropriate content is easily accessible through many social media platforms. TikTok, for instance, is hugely popular with young people but is arguably best known for clips featuring sexualised dancing or profanity. Some social media users also express hate speech or promote eating disorders and self-harm, which could cause lasting damage to a child's emotional and mental health.

GAMING

Gaming is an enjoyable source of entertainment, but many popular titles can expose children to inappropriate material such as violence, horror, gambling or sexually explicit content. Playing games unsuitable for their age risks normalising to children what they are seeing. Some games also include in-game chat, where other (usually older) online players often use language that you probably wouldn't want your child to hear or repeat.

STREAMING

The range of video streaming services available online means that users can find almost anything they want to watch on demand. Children are therefore at risk of viewing TV shows and movies which contain nudity, drug and alcohol abuse, explicit language and extreme violence. Unfortunately, these streaming platforms can't always determine that it's not an adult who's watching.

ADVERTS

Online adverts frequently include age-inappropriate content: usually gambling and nudity or partial nudity, although adverts for alcohol or e-cigarettes are also common. Some search engines also feature adverts that are responsive to your search history: so if you've recently looked up a new horror movie, shopped for lingerie or ordered alcohol online, then the ads appearing on screen could reflect this the next time your child borrows your device.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK IT THROUGH

Embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble can make it difficult for children to talk openly about age-inappropriate content they've watched. Remind your child they can always come to you if they're troubled by something they've seen online, without worrying about consequences. Before offering advice, discuss what they saw, how they felt and how they came to find the content in question.



CONNECT, DON'T CORRECT

If your child's been particularly distressed by exposure to content that wasn't suitable for their age, it's important to offer guidance to prevent them from repeating the same mistake – but it's equally vital to help them deal with the emotions that the situation has raised. You could tell them about any similar experiences you might have had at their age, and how you dealt with it.



BLOCK, REPORT, CONTROL

After discussing the problem, you and your child can take action together. This could include blocking any inappropriate sites and reporting any content which violates a platform's rules. To further safeguard your child online, set up parental controls on internet-enabled devices that they use. This will significantly reduce the chances of your child being exposed to age-inappropriate content in future.



GET SPECIALIST HELP

Age-inappropriate content can potentially have a negative impact on a child's mental health, which is sometimes displayed through changes in their behaviour. If the problem becomes more severe, you might consider reaching out to a mental health professional or an expert in this field who can provide you and your child with the proper support.



STAY CALM

Even though it is obviously difficult to stay rational in a situation where your child has been put at risk, it's essential to think before you react. Your child may well have hesitated to open up to you about watching inappropriate content for fear of the consequences, so being calm and supportive will reinforce the notion that it would be easy to talk to you about similar issues in the future.



Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is a Registered Counsellor with The Health Professions Council of South Africa, and she runs a private practice offering counselling to children, teenagers and families. Her main focus is creating awareness and educating the community on the mental health pressures of today's world, as well as resources and techniques to understand and cope better.



NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://www.educatorsvic.gov.au/Documents/about/program/bullying/age-inappropriate.pdf> | <https://www.safely.gov.au/educators/training-professionals/professional-learning-program/teachers/inappropriate-content-fact-sheet/> | <https://www.welshgality.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/childrens-media-lives-year-7.pdf>



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Safeguarding at BKHS KHVIII for STUDENTS

All students can expect the following from BKHS
King Henry VIII Staff:

- Vigilance
- Understanding and action
- Stability
- Respect
- Information and Engagement
- Explanation
- Support
- Advocacy

If you are **WORRIED** or are worried about a friend, share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), a trusted staff member, an anti-bullying ambassador or post a note in one of the My Concern Boxes



DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS



Dr M Cuthbert
Deputy Head
DSL



Mrs S Cadwallader
School Nurse
DDSL



Mr P Dearden
Headmaster
DDSL



Mrs C Dowding
Deputy Head
DDSL

Emergency Help

Call **999** if you are at immediate risk
NHS Mental Health Crisis service: call
0300 200 0011 free 24/7 service
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>
Free **text YM to 85258**
24/7 crisis support
Samaritans call free on **116 123**
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>
Call free on **0800 1111**

Mental Health Support

<https://www.kooth.com/> Free, safe and anonymous support from trained counsellors
RISE (for children and young people) call **08081 966798** (select option 2) Crisis & Home Treatment team
Dimensions Tool offers immediate tailored self-help support and signposting to local services.
IAPT Website Coventry & Warwickshire Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service
Tel: **024 7667 1090**

Online Safety and Other Support

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
to REPORT abuse
NSPCC Call for free: **0808 800 5000**

<https://www.childnet.com/>
<https://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/internet-safety/>
<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

All employed Staff who are safe to work with children wear a BLACK BKHS Lanyard

GREEN lanyards are worn by visitors that are allowed to be on site without supervision



PINK lanyards are worn by visitors that are NOT allowed to be on site without supervision: report to reception



