King Henry VIII School Pastoral Letter
Age Appropriate Social Media and Online Gaming

Dr MB Cuthbert (Deputy Head/Designated Safeguarding Lead)
1 December 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In our recent whole school questionnaire, we asked pupils whether they know how to safe online. Overwhelmingly, **99% said YES**

This does concern me because many of our younger students communicate with each other through social media apps and online games that are **NOT** age appropriate for them.

On the 26 October 2023, the [Online Safety Act 2023](#) received Royal Assent, heralding a new era of internet safety and choice by placing world-first legal duties on social media platforms. The new laws take a zero-tolerance approach to protecting children from online harm, while empowering adults with more choices over what they see online.

The Act takes a zero-tolerance approach to protecting children by making sure the buck stops with social media platforms for content they host. It does this by making sure they:

- Remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place, including content promoting self-harm,
- Prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content including pornographic content, content that promotes, encourages or provides instructions for suicide, self-harm or eating disorders, content depicting or encouraging serious violence or bullying content;
- Enforce age limits and use age-checking measures on platforms where content harmful to children is published;
- Ensure social media platforms are more transparent about the risks and dangers posed to children on their sites, including by publishing risk assessments;
- Provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise.

Age Appropriate Platforms

Age ratings are designed to help users find suitable and appropriate online content and platforms. They can also be hard to understand, especially when they are not always consistent. Age ratings are used across different types of online content and platforms to guide on what is suitable for different ages. Most popular content and platforms, from the films and TV shows you stream, to the games you play and the social media you use, will have an age rating. But things aren't always as simple as you might hope.

Social networks have a minimum age for use, and this is specified in the network's terms and conditions or terms of service. Creating an account to join the network indicates acceptance of these terms. The minimum age for most networks is set at 13-years-old, though some networks will give a minimum age of 16, and some will stipulate age 18 or over. The minimum age is also influenced by our country's national data protection laws.

All the following Social Media Apps have an age restriction of 13:
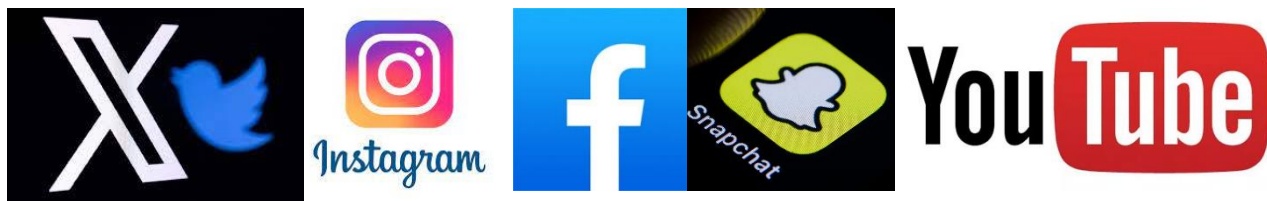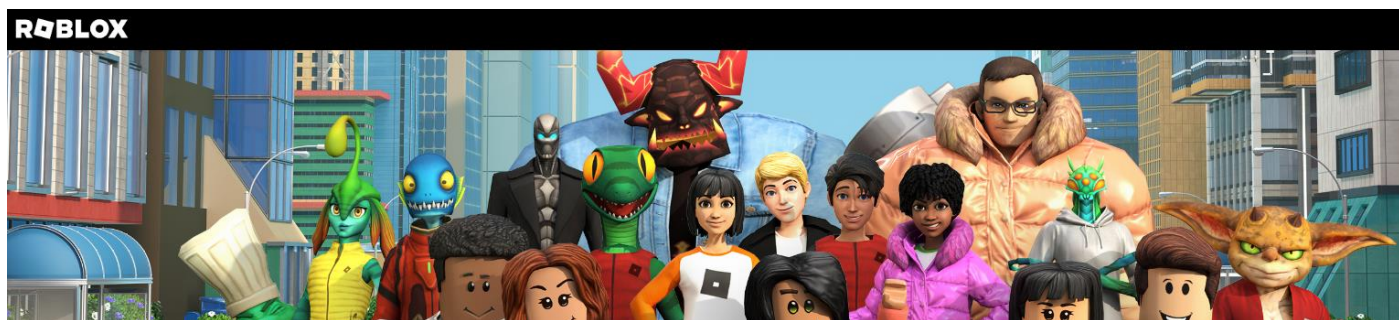

And the very popular

For YouTube, a young person **MUST** get the permission of a parent unless they are 18.

 It is also important to note that **WhatsApp has an age restriction of 16.**

Many of our young people communicate with each other and strangers when gaming online. The [NSPCC](#) have some excellent advice on managing online gaming within the home.

Roblox offers users of all ages the ability to socialize and play experiences with others in the community. There are multiple opportunities to chat with others, and various experiences that offer different experiences from Adventure to Combat to Role Playing, and more. They do allow experiences with some forms of cartoon violence, as long as they are not overly graphic or realistic.

However, Roblox does offer a feature that allows parents to limit the ability to chat, and types of experiences their children can access. Parents can learn more about how we keep teenagers safe and our parental controls with their [Parents Guide](#). Be careful though, because if there is not a parental pin attached to the account then young people can change the settings to what they want.

What could you do to protect your teenagers and support our school community?

1. Help them set privacy settings at the strongest level. Sites can change privacy settings so make sure you stay up to date with them.

2. Report people and inappropriate conversations to the site administrator via the 'help' or 'report' tab (if available) and always keep a copy of the conversation as evidence.

3. Teach your child how to block or ignore people on social networking sites and online games and support them in knowing what they can do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable.

4. Set boundaries about which sites they can use and for how long. Try to do this when they first start using social networking sites, so they get used to it from a young age.

5. Teach your child never to share any personal details – this includes their password, real name, address and their school.

6. Use the site yourself. You or another trusted adult can become your child's friend on Facebook or follower on Twitter.

7. Explain that friends should be people they know – people they meet online may not be who they say they are.

8. Stress that meeting up with people they know online can be dangerous and that they should only do so with your permission and if you are present.

9. Set rules about what they should and shouldn't post.

10. Talk to your child about the fact that what they post can't always be taken back, and even if it can, it may already have been shared.

Many thanks for reading my Pastoral Letter,

Dr MB Cuthbert

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KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL

Safeguarding & Wellbeing for PUPILS/STUDENTS (2023/2024)

All students can expect the following from KHVIII Staff:

- Vigilance
- Stability
- Information and Engagement
- Understanding and action
- Explanation
- Respect
- 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, My Concern Boxes or use the 'I Need Help' button on the School's Intranet.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS & PUPIL WELLBEING SUPPORT

Dr Cuthbert Deputy Head DSL

Mrs Cadwallader School Nurse DDSL

Mr Dearden Headmaster DDSL

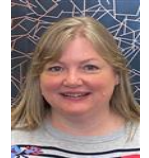**Mrs Kaczur** Assistant Head DDSL

Mrs Brindley SENCo

Mrs Tromans Pupil Wellbeing Mentor

Mrs Dowding Deputy Head

Rev Slavic School Chaplain

Miss Rees 6th Form Learning Mentor

Miss Ainsworth HoY 7

Mr Andrews Assistant HoY 7

Dr Coull HoY 8

Mr Amlani HoY 9

Mr Parker HoY 10

Mr McKee HoY 11

Mr Lovell HoY L6

Mrs Tracey HoY U6

Mr Miller Assistant Head Sixth Form

Emergency Help
For when you don't think you can keep yourself safe

Call **999** if you are at immediate risk

NHS Mental Health Crisis service: call **0300 200 0011** free 24/7 service

Young Minds: 24/7 Crisis Support
Free text to **85258**
https://youngminds.org.uk/

RISE: Crisis support for children and young people
Call **08081 966798 (select option 2)**

Papyrus: Confidential support and advice for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide
Call **0800 068 4141** or text **07860 039967**

Emotional Wellbeing Support
For when you need guidance or someone to listen

Young Minds: Guidance and advice for Mental health
https://youngminds.org.uk/

Kooth: Free confidential online counselling support
https://www.kooth.com/

Childline: Free telephone counselling support for young people for any issue
Call free on **0800 1111**
https://www.childline.org.uk/

Samaritans: 24 hour confidential emotional support and guidance
Call free on **116 123**

If you are 16+ years

Healthy Mind Service (IAPT: Improving Access to Psychological Therapy): A therapeutic intervention service for people feeling anxious, low in mood and depressed. Call **02476 671090** www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/iapt

All employed Staff who are safe to work with children wear a BLACK KHVIII Lanyard
All Governors who have been DBS checked wear a BLUE Coventry Foundation 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