

Monday 26th April, 2021

Social Media Usage – Parent Guidance

Dear Parents/Carers,

We all know the benefits the internet and social media can bring to young people, but there are significant risks as well. Over the last year, we have sadly seen problems increase. This is in part linked to lockdowns, and has happened in most schools, not just KAA.

By working together, we can do better. In many cases, KAA students are using the internet and social media responsibly and safely. They understand, for example, that saying something online is the same as saying something in person, even if it might seem easier to click a button. But there is definitely room for improvement. Two specific new initiatives I wanted to share are;

- 1) We are producing a series of short videos for parents offering advice on how to supervise their child's use of social media. The first one can be viewed here - https://youtu.be/4DnfM0EVi_I. Further videos will be shared by email in the coming weeks. *The online world is constantly changing, and it can be hard for us as parents to keep up - these videos will help.*
- 2) For students who encounter serious or repeated problems, we have a new programme in place to support. It will teach students to better navigate the online world and avoid repeating the same mistakes. If we think your child will benefit from this, we will be in touch.

A related point is that, earlier this year, I had to write to all parents about a serious incident in which a student's email account had been breached, and a series of inappropriate messages were emailed to all students. I wanted to reassure all parents that, following an investigation, the culprit was identified and is now attending a different school. I should also be clear that the student whose account the emails came from was totally blameless in this – we confirmed this to those closely involved at the time, but I wanted to make all parents aware. Their only mistake was to use a simple password that was easy to guess, *which is exactly the kind of lesson we are educating students about with videos like the one above.*

If any parent has concerns about how their child is using social media, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the relevant Director of Learning (details below). If you have questions about the social media guidance videos, please contact our Family Connections Manager Nicki Wyss via email at n.wyss@kaa.org.uk.

Thanks to parents for all their ongoing support with this matter – it is appreciated.

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Principal

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