



Dear Parents and Carers,

Subject: Keeping Our Children Safe Online – Social Media Use

I hope this letter finds you well. As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding our children, we would like to address a growing concern regarding the use of social media apps among our pupils.

Many popular social media platforms, such as **TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Facebook**, have a minimum age requirement of **13** years old. These restrictions are in place to protect children from exposure to inappropriate content, online risks, and the pressures of social media. Despite these age limits, we are aware that some of our pupils are accessing these platforms, and we would like to work together with you to ensure their safety online.

Over the last school year Rimrose Hope parents have reported the following issues affecting their children:

- **Exposure to inappropriate content** – Social media is not designed for young children and some of our children have been exposed to harmful material.
- **Online strangers and unsafe interactions** – Many apps allow direct messaging and interactions with strangers and some children have placed themselves at risk.
- **Cyberbullying** – Social media has all too often been a platform for unkind behaviour (even amongst friends) which has had a negative impact on our children's well-being.
- **Effects on mental health** – Too many parents have reported that social media has had a negative impact on their child's well-being and mental health.

As a school, we strongly advise that primary school-aged children do not use social media. We encourage all parents to monitor their child's online activity closely and ensure they are only using **age-appropriate apps and websites**. If your child is using social media, we recommend having open conversations with them about online safety, setting strict privacy settings, and supervising their interactions.

We will always work to keep your children safe and address issues as they arise, but please understand that our first solution to problems that occur on messaging and social media apps will be to remind parents that the minimum age restriction for using these apps is 13, and for many of them it is 16 or 17 for a reason. The reason is that they are not safe for young children who are not emotionally developed enough to cope with being constantly in touch with each other, let alone strangers. To us, the simplest solution to many of the risks and distress caused is simply to abide by the age restrictions on the app.

Thank you for your support in keeping our children safe.

L A Crilly