

20 October 2026

Social Media and Keeping Your Child Safe

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have been made aware that some of our Year 7 and Year 8 pupils have social media accounts, including Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms, despite the minimum age requirement for many of these services being 13, with this expected to change to 16 in Spring 2027.

At Hodge Hill College, we are committed to safeguarding our pupils and promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet. We are writing to raise awareness of the potential risks of children accessing social media at a young age and to encourage parents and carers to take an active role in keeping their children safe online.

Potential risks associated with social media

We are concerned that some pupils' social media profiles may:

- Have inadequate privacy and security settings, allowing strangers to view their profiles and personal information
- Include photographs of themselves or other pupils wearing school uniform, making them easily identifiable
- Reveal personal information that could allow others to identify their location, school or daily routines
- Contain inappropriate language, images, videos or other content
- Expose pupils to content shared by other users that may be unsuitable for their age, even when their own profiles appear appropriate

Although social media can provide opportunities for communication and connection, these platforms can also expose young people to risks they may not yet have the maturity or experience to recognise. These include unwanted contact from strangers, cyberbullying, harmful or inappropriate content, online grooming, and the sharing of personal information or images without consent.

Children who register with a false date of birth may also be exposed to features and content that aren't appropriate for their age. Remember that people online may not always be who they claim to be.

How can parents and carers help?

We strongly encourage all parents and carers to speak regularly with their children about their online activities and to check that they are using digital platforms safely and responsibly.

We recommend that you:

- **Check age requirements.** Ensure your child meets the minimum age requirements for any platform they wish to use. Most major social media platforms require users to be at least 13, although requirements can vary
- **Review privacy settings.** Make sure accounts are private wherever possible and review who can see posts, contact your child, comment on content or view their location

- **Monitor online activity.** Take an active interest in the apps your child uses, the content they view and the people they communicate with
- **Talk about online friendships.** Remind your child not to accept requests from people they do not know and trust in real life
- **Protect personal information.** Encourage your child not to share their full name, address, phone number, school details, location or daily routines online
- **Think before posting.** Remind your child that photographs, messages and videos can be copied, shared or saved, even if they are later deleted
- **Discuss respectful behaviour.** Make it clear that hurtful messages, inappropriate images, bullying and sharing somebody else's content without permission are unacceptable
- **Encourage open communication.** Ensure your child knows they can speak to you or another trusted adult if something online makes them feel uncomfortable, frightened or upset

We also recommend that parents and carers familiarise themselves with the apps their children use and consider appropriate parental controls and age restrictions.

Useful websites for parents and carers

The following websites provide further advice and guidance on keeping children safe online:

- **CEOP Education – Thinkuknow:** www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- **Internet Matters:** www.internetmatters.org
- **NSPCC Online Safety:** www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- **Childline:** www.childline.org.uk

Our commitment to online safety

At Hodge Hill College, online safety is taken very seriously. We discuss e-safety with pupils throughout the academic year to help them understand the importance of making safe, responsible and respectful choices online.

If you have concerns about your child's online activity or feel that your child requires further support, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Where concerns arise regarding the safety or wellbeing of any pupil, we will take appropriate action in line with our safeguarding procedures. Where necessary, this may include working with external agencies or the police.

We appreciate your continued support in helping us keep all our pupils safe, both in school and online. By working together, we can help our children develop the knowledge and confidence they need to navigate the online world safely.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

R Patel

Mr R Patel

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