



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST
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ACADEMY**

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Dear parent / carer

I am writing to you to clarify elements of the school's policy on the misuse of social media. As you may be aware, we are frequently asked to deal with situations caused by the misuse of social media, sometimes by our students and other times where our students have been the victims of misuse.

The misuse of social media in school is very rare due to the application of school policies. Indeed, most inappropriate use of the internet and social media occurs whilst students are out of school - at home or on mobile devices during evenings, weekends and holidays. Staff at the school have no jurisdiction to deal with this and cannot investigate it.

The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or indeed the internet in general, must lie with parents/carers. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your child. It is also worth noting that the minimum age limit for Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Snapchat and TikTok is 13 years unless the account has parental control settings. This means that none of our students in Year 7, and only some of our students in Year 8, should be using these social media platforms.

If your child is the victim of inappropriate use of the internet and/or social media, we strongly recommend that you report the matter to both the social media service and to the police. As stated earlier, unless an issue manifests itself during the normal school day, our staff are not able to address this.

However, to support you and your child the school will:

- Continue, through PSHE and assemblies, to educate students of the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet
- Continue to monitor the use of any form of ICT in normal school hours and the use of the school email system at all times, and will deal with anything deemed inappropriate
- Refer anything that we believe could be defined as, or could potentially lead to, a Child Protection issue to the appropriate external agencies
- Continue to support parents with advice on how to tackle inappropriate use either by their own child or others

I hope that you find this information useful and by working together, as outlined in this letter, I trust that we can keep all our students safe and well.

Yours faithfully

Mr V Groak
Headteacher

Top Tips for SETTING UP PARENTAL CONTROLS ON NEW DEVICES

In children's eagerness to start enjoying new digital gadgets immediately, it can be easy to overlook setting up the type of parental controls that can help to protect them online. If you don't sort these out from the very start, it can be an uphill battle – technologically and psychologically – to impose such controls later. Here's our rundown of what to look for when setting up the various internet-enabled devices that might be lurking under the tree at this time of year.

IPHONE

If your child's lucky enough to be getting their own iPhone, parental controls can help avoid issues like screen addiction and unsuitable content. Go into the settings and scroll down to 'Screen Time'. From here you can customise important settings including time limits on using the device, communication restrictions and content blockers. You can also lock your changes behind a passcode.

ANDROID

With Android devices, Google's Family Link app is your friend. You'll need a Google account – and a separate one for your child, which you should use when first setting up the device. Then, in Family Link on your own device, select 'Add Child' and enter their account details. This lets you specify limits on daily usage, restrict certain apps, block particular content and more.

PLAYSTATION

You can prep for a PlayStation before it's even unboxed. At my.account.sony.com, create an account, then go to Account Management > Family Management > Add Family Member to set up your child's account, which you'll use to sign in on the console. You can restrict the age ratings of the games they can play and who they can talk to. On the PS4, you can make exceptions for any games you think are acceptable despite their high age rating.

IPAD

iPad parental controls are identical to those on iPhones. However, if you've got a shared family iPad and want to ensure your children aren't seeing anything age-inappropriate after you hand them the device, there's a feature called Guided Access (Under Settings > Accessibility > Guided Access). With this switched on, young ones can only use the app that's currently open.

XBOX

The Xbox Family Settings app helps you manage which games your child can play (and when). You'll need to set up the console with your own account and then add a child profile. Make sure your account's password protected, so your child can't enter your choice later. You'll be walked through the functions at setup, but you can also reach them manually via Settings > Account > Family Settings.

NINTENDO SWITCH

Download the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app on your phone, and you'll be shown how to link it to the console. Once that's done, you can limit how long your child can play each day, decide what age ratings are permitted and more. You'll also get weekly updates on how often they've used the device. These controls are accessible through the console itself, but the app is usually easier.

WINDOWS 11 PCS

On Windows 11, account management is key. Set up the device with your own account as the admin. Then go to Settings > Accounts > Family and Other Users and create your child's account (if you've already done this on a previous PC, just log in with those details). Microsoft Family Safety (either the app or the site) then lets you control screen time, what content children can view and more.

CHROMEBOOKS

Chromebooks' parental controls are managed via the Family Link app. Unlike an Android device, however, you need set up the Chromebook with your own account first, then add your child's. Go to Settings > People > Add Person and input your child's Google account details (or create a new account). Your child can then log in, and you can monitor what they're up to via Family Link.

MACS

Like iPhones, parental controls for Macs are managed via the Screen Time settings. Again, the crux here is to set yourself up as the administrator before adding any child accounts. In the settings, look for Users & Groups to create your child's account, then – while on their profile – use the screen time options to place any boundaries around apps, usage and who your child can communicate with (and vice versa).

SMART TVS

Smart TVs typically have their own individual parental controls. One of the most popular brands is Samsung – and on their TVs, you can control the content available to your child. In the Settings menu, under 'Broadcasting', you can lock channels and restrict content by its age rating. Even this isn't foolproof, however; some apps (like YouTube) might still let children access unsuitable material.

Meet Our Expert

Benny Collins is a technology journalist and editor with more than 20 years' experience of writing for titles such as the Sunday Times, Windows, PC Pro and Computerworld. He's appeared regularly as a tech expert on television and with a podcast on BBC News 24's Radio 4 Live in the World. He has two children and writes regularly on the subject of internet safety.



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