St. Mark's CE (Aided) Primary School

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Interim Executive Headteacher: Mrs Lord

19th November 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well.
We are writing to you as we are increasingly aware and concerned about some pupils using social media and instant messaging platforms that are not age appropriate. Our concerns regarding this matter relate both to classroom behaviour and learning, and to issues of online safety and safeguarding.

We need your help! Whilst we recognise many of our families already have parent controls in place at home, please can we ask that you double check what, if any, social media apps your child may be using. *Today we are very concerned that there have been horrifying and gratuitous images and posts of the bombing in Gaza shared across social media platforms, including TikTok – if your child is using TikTok, these may well appear in their feed.* In addition to this, there have been some recent occurrences of instant messaging on Snapchat and children making derogatory comments about others which is wholly unacceptable. This causes upset for those involved and also distracts the children from their learning and it also takes staff away from their work to resolve.

We must be assertive and proactive in keeping our children safe in an increasingly connected world. For this reason, it is vital that all parents are aware of and understand current regulations and guidance. For example, it may be useful to know the following age requirements for holding social media accounts:

- **Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube – 13 years**
- **WhatsApp – 16 years**
- **Tik Tok requires users to be at least 13 years old to access its platform.** (Common Sense Media https://www.commonsensemedia.org/ has recommended that this app is appropriate for those aged at least 16 years old and above due to its mature content and information settings.)

These are some of the most common social media platforms that we know some pupils have been using; all are beyond primary school age. If your child is using these, please can we request that these are deleted thus avoiding 'falling outs' that might occur online outside of school which impact their behaviour, friendships and learning in school.

For information about parental control settings or security settings for social media and games consoles, the following link can help you: https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/ .

There is also more advice and information on the school website on the Online Safety page https://www.stmarks.brighton-hove.sch.uk/learning/online-safety

If you require any further information, please contact us on: help@stmarks.brighton-hove.sch.uk, thank you so much for your continued support,

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Michelle Lord