

13/11/2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope this letter finds you well.

We are writing to remind you of our school's policy regarding social media use and smartphone ownership for Year 7 students.

We wanted to take a moment to discuss the increasing influence of social media on young people and the importance of responsible online behaviour. As your child enters their secondary school years, they will likely spend more time online, interacting with peers and accessing a vast amount of information.

The Potential Impact of Social Media:

While social media can be a valuable tool for communication and learning, it can also present significant risks, including:

- **Cyberbullying:** The anonymous nature of online platforms can embolden individuals to engage in harmful behaviour.
- **Mental Health Issues:** Excessive social media use has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Sharing personal information online can lead to identity theft and other security risks.

Our Commitment to Your Child's Safety:

At Heron Hall Academy, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment. We will continue to educate students about online safety and digital citizenship. However, we cannot be responsible for their online activity outside of school hours.

As educators, we are committed to collaborate with parents to address any concerns or issues related to social media use.

Your Role as Parents:

We encourage you to play an active role in monitoring your child's online activity. Here are some tips to help you:

- **Set Clear Boundaries:** Establish rules about device usage, screen time limits, and appropriate online content.
- **Open Communication:** Talk to your child about their online experiences and encourage them to come to you with any concerns.
- **Use Parental Controls:** Utilise parental control tools to filter content and restrict access to certain websites and apps.
- **Supervision:** Supervise your child's social media use, especially during unsupervised time.
- **Education:** Educate your child about the potential risks and consequences of inappropriate online behaviour.

School Policy on Smart Phones

To minimise distractions and promote a focused learning environment, we have ***banned students bringing smartphones*** to school. If necessary, students may bring a basic mobile phone (e.g., a "brick phone") for emergencies only. We undertake random searches to ensure that pupils adhere to this.

We appreciate your cooperation in upholding these guidelines. Together, we can create a safe and positive online environment for our students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barzey', written in a cursive style.

Mr Arthur Barzey
Headteacher