Yeading Junior School

Dear Parents/ Carers 06/10/26

The power of technology to enhance our learning and development and improve our quality of life through entertainment and engagement is clear. At Yeading we embrace technology and are working hard to develop pupil's digital literacy and prepare them for tomorrow's world which is becoming increasingly technology led. However, it is clear that some children are using social media and parents have misconceptions around its usage. We have evidence of this happening at Yeading Junior School. It is important to understand that all social media platforms have age restrictions. **From Spring 2027 all under 16s will be banned from Social Media by the UK government**. This is in response to the harms social media is causing children.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online

Banned:

- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Facebook
- X (formerly Twitter)
- YouTube

Not banned:

- Whatsapp (already has an age limit of 16)
- Signal
- Youtube kids
- Learning apps

We strongly recommend that the bans and age restrictions are followed for the following reasons:

If children have an account on these sites/apps then they have lied about their age in the sign up process. We are all trying to raise good people who know right from wrong and good from bad. If you allow them to lie about their age regarding social media you are setting the wrong example and giving the green light to lying.

Some people rationalise with 'everyone is on it' or 'everyone is doing it'. No they are not and history teaches us this is a very poor reason for doing something. In fact a majority of children are not. This majority includes the children of the head of Meta in Europe (WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram) who openly said in an EU court that they would not allow their children on it as they worried it could have a negative impact on them.

Children may claim they 'need' social media for various reasons. It is important that as adults we teach children the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'. There is no rationale for needing access to social media. There is a big difference between having a phone and having social media. If your child has a phone do you know exactly what they are doing on it?

Anything posted is permanent. What people say and do - the power that we all have - lives on in the digital world permanently. As soon as it is shared the individual no longer owns it. This can and does have a negative impact where mistakes said and done as a child have a continuous impact in the adult world. It is standard practice for employers and institutes of higher education to search for all digital footprints of candidates as part of the recruitment process. Mistakes in the form of immature comments and information people have shared as children is more and more commonly impacting their ambitions and aspirations as adults.

Emotional maturity and readiness - Unfortunately, social media related crime is increasing (https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/cyber-online-crime). From this we can surmise that a large portion of our adult population is not developed enough for the power our words and actions can have in the online world and the responsibility that should come with that. You wouldn't give someone under 17 keys to a car and let them use it because they are not developed and ready - similarly we shouldn't be giving children who are not ready access to social media.

Many Social Media platforms are specifically designed to monetise your time. The algorithms they use target individuals with content they may 'like' to ensure people stay on longer and longer and can be targeted with more and more advertising. As this is a crucial developmental phase of your children, do you as parents want this to be what children spend their time on? They only have one childhood and I can only think that at some point in the future there will be a great deal of regret if too much time is wasted scrolling.

If you have given false information about your age, data protection laws will stop applying after the false age they have given turns 18. For example, if at age 10 they have lied and said they are 13 to join Instagram or Tiktok then when they are 15 the data protection act will no longer apply. This means at 15 their information will be tracked, shared and they will be targeted by adverts suitable only for adults. They will also have contact recommendations directed to them over people they 'may know'. Another even more concerning example is, if at age 10 they have lied and said they are 16 to join WhatsApp then when they are 12 the data protection act will no longer apply. This means their information will be tracked,

shared and they will be targeted by adverts suitable only for adults across WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook as these all come under the Meta brand.

Risk Vs Reward

Reward

- The only rewards for social media usage is allowing digital connection with other people and accessing a form of entertainment.

Risks

- Oversharing
- Sharing their location
- Talking to people they don't know
- Sending or receiving inappropriate content
- Unrealistic sense of body image or reality
- Obsessive focus on likes and comments
- Negative impact on mental health
- Negative impact on time
- Targeted with inappropriate content

When we look at the risks - is the reward really worth it.

I write this to inform parents of the reality of social media usage as only through becoming informed and aware can we make the best decisions for our children.

Thank you for taking your time to read this.





Kind regards

Michael Hall

Headteacher