



# St Benedict's

Catholic High School, Alcester

24 January 2018

## **RE. Responsible Internet Use and E-Safety**

Dear Parent/Carer

As we continue to work together to support your child in the safe use of the Internet, I am writing to inform you of some strategies you can implement to help safeguard your child whilst on their phone/game console/computer.

This seems like an opportune moment, especially during the winter months when children often spend more time inside using their computers, gaming consoles, tablets, and smart phones, to raise concerns about children using the Internet in 'loosely' supervised or unsupervised situations. I cannot stress enough how important it is that you have in place measures which will ensure you are able to monitor their safe use of the Internet at home, and the need for you to have an awareness of the sites your child is accessing.

I have highlighted to pupils during assemblies, the importance that they use the technological device entrusted to them in a way which is responsible and will support their studies and lifestyle whilst in keeping with the ethos of our school. As parents we are in the position of 'primary educator' and I would ask that you reiterate the points in this letter so that we ensure a consistent message is relayed to all of our pupils.

We are concerned that, as much of the socialising our pupils do has now moved online. They are scared that if they go 'offline' for any period of time they will miss out on important developments within their friendship groups. There is a temptation for children to stay up late at night, whether this is on a computer in their room or in bed with their mobile which inevitably makes them tired the following day, reduces Melatonin, and severely impedes their progress and learning in school.

It has been noted that parents would like further advice on how to monitor their children's use of social networking or mobile phone communications and I include some guidance below.

### **Recommendations:**

- Try to keep computers and laptops in communal areas of the home where you can monitor what your child is looking at online. Do not allow your child to access the Internet from their bedrooms for prolonged periods of time. This is particularly the case at night when they may be likely to stay up late posting and reading comments.



St Benedict's Catholic High School, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PX  
Tel: 01789 762888 - Email: [admin@st-benedicts.org](mailto:admin@st-benedicts.org) - Website: [www.st-benedicts.org](http://www.st-benedicts.org)  
Headteacher: Mr N Gibson

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- Monitor your child's mobile phone usage closely. This is particularly the case at night. One successful strategy is taking your child's mobile phone from them when they go to bed, to put it on charge, and returning it in the morning. This encourages openness and we would strongly advise it.
- Have access to your child's social networking accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler, Skype, Snapchat, Instagram etc) and be aware of what your child is posting on the sites. One successful strategy is to feature as a 'friend', or have access to your child's password. Whilst it is difficult to monitor everything that is being posted online, and that you may feel that your child is entitled to some privacy, it is strongly advisable that you are able to access the content of this communication as and when you deem necessary. There is a temptation sometimes to write on the Internet and not to take responsibility - immediacy is muted and once-removed by the technology. Not only is this clearly not the case, it can form part of the pupil's technological "footprint" which in a moment of lack of thought could have ramifications in their future employment.

It is also worth being aware of the legal age requirements for different social media accounts. For Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Tumbler and Kik, the Legal minimum age is 13. For Whatsapp accounts the Legal minimum age is 16.

My advice for parents about how best to deal with these issues at home is to speak to your child directly, make your behavioural expectations clear, be involved with his or her 'virtual' life just as you are with other daily activities. Make sure you have access to any sites your child frequents and you can see all the published content whenever you need to. Actively supervise your child when he or she uses technology, using a strategy that suits you, and fits in with the family routine.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deacon Stone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Deacon S Dunton  
Pastoral Team